

2 SAMUEL

INTRODUCTION

The two Books of Samuel are classified as one book in the Jewish canon and should be considered as such. In the Latin Vulgate they are the first of four Books of Kings. Our title identifies the name of Samuel with these first two historical books. This is not because he is the writer, although we do believe that he is the writer of a good portion of it. It is because his story occurs first, and he figures prominently as the one who poured the anointing oil on both Saul and David. Samuel, then, is considered the writer of 1 Samuel up to the twenty-fifth chapter, which records his death. Apparently, Nathan and Gad completed the writing of these books. We learn this from [1Samuel 10:25](#) and [1Chronicles 29:29](#).

The Books of Samuel contain many familiar features. We read of the rise of the kingdom of Israel. There is also the story of Hannah and her little boy Samuel. Recorded in these books is the story of David and Goliath and the unusual and touching friendship of David and Jonathan. We have the account of King Saul's visit to the witch of En-dor, and [2Samuel 7](#) -- one of the great chapters of the Word of God -- gives us God's covenant with David. Finally, we have the record of David's great sin with Bathsheba and of the rebellion of his son Absalom.

In the Book of Judges we find that God used little people, many of whom had some serious fault or defect. Their stories are a great encouragement to those of us today who are little people. However, in 1 and 2 Samuel we meet some really outstanding folk: Hannah, Eli, Samuel, Saul, Jonathan, and David. We will become acquainted with each of them as we go through these books.

There are three subjects that may be considered themes of the Books of 1 and 2 Samuel. Prayer is the first. First Samuel opens with prayer, and 2 Samuel closes with prayer. And there's a great deal of prayer in between. A second theme is the rise of the kingdom. We have recorded in these books the change in the government of Israel from a theocracy to a kingdom. Of great significance is God's covenant with David given to us in [2Samuel 7](#). We will comment further on the kingdom in a moment. The third theme is the rise of the office of prophet. When Israel was a theocracy, God moved through the priesthood. However, when the priests failed and a king was anointed, God set the priests aside and raised up the prophets as His messengers. We will find that for the nation of Israel this resulted in deterioration rather than improvement.

The rise of the kingdom is of particular importance. First and Second Samuel record the origin of this kingdom, which continues as a very important subject throughout both the Old and New Testaments. The first message of the New Testament was the message of John the Baptist: ". . . Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" ([Matt. 3:2](#)). The kingdom of which he spoke is the kingdom of the Old Testament, the kingdom that begins in the Books of Samuel. This kingdom we find has a very historical basis, an earthly origin, and geographical borders. This kingdom has a king, and its subjects are real people.

God's chosen form of government is a kingdom ruled by a king. Yet to change the form of our government today would not solve our problems. It is not the form that is bad -- it is the people connected with it. But a kingdom is God's ideal, and He intends to put His King on the throne of this earth someday. When Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, rules this world it will be very unlike the job men are doing today. There will be no need for a poverty program, an ecological program, or for moral reforms. Rather, there will be righteousness and peace covering this earth like the waters cover the sea.

In these books the coming millennial Kingdom is foreshadowed in several respects; and in the setting up of the kingdom of Israel we observe three things that our world needs: (1) a king with power who exercises that power in righteousness; (2) a king who will rule in full dependence upon God; and (3) a king who will rule in full obedience to God. The Lord Jesus Christ, the coming King of kings, is the very One the world so desperately needs today.

Outline

I. Triumphs of David, [2Sam. 1](#) through [2Sam. 10](#)

- A. David Mourns the Death of Saul and Jonathan, [2Sam. 1](#)
- B. David Made King over Judah, [2Sam. 2](#)
- C. Civil War -- Abner Joins with David but Is Murdered by Joab, [2Sam. 3](#)
- D. Ish-bosheth, the Son of Saul, Killed, [2Sam. 4](#)
- E. David Made King over All Israel; Moves His Capital to Jerusalem, [2Sam. 5](#)
- F. David's Wrong and Right Attempts to Bring the Ark to Jerusalem, [2Sam. 6](#)
- G. God's Covenant to Build the House of David, [2Sam. 7](#)
- H. David Consolidates His Kingdom, [2Sam. 8](#)
- I. David Befriends Mephibosheth, [2Sam. 9](#)
- J. David Wars against Ammon and Syria, [2Sam. 10](#)

II. Troubles of David, [2Sam. 11](#) through [2Sam. 24](#)

- A. David's Two Great Sins, [2Sam. 11](#)
- B. Nathan Faces David with His Sins; David Repents, [2Sam. 12](#)
- C. David's Daughter Tamar Raped by Amnon, David's Son; Amnon Is Murdered by Absalom, David's Son, [2Sam. 13](#)
- D. David Permits Absalom to Return with Half-hearted Forgiveness, [2Sam. 14](#)
- E. Absalom Rebels against David, [2Sam. 15](#)
- F. Ziba, Mephibosheth's Servant, Deceives David; Shimei Curses David, [2Sam. 16](#)
- G. Absalom's Advisers (Ahithophel and Hushai) Disagree on Attack against David, [2Sam. 17](#)
- H. Absalom Is Slain and David Mourns, [2Sam. 18](#)
- I. David Is Restored to Throne, [2Sam. 19](#)
- J. Sheba Revolts against David, [2Sam. 20](#)
- K. Three-Year Famine; Gibeonites Take Vengeance on House of Saul; War with Philistines, [2Sam. 21](#)
- L. David's Song of Deliverance ([Psalm 18](#)), [2Sam. 22](#)
- M. David's Last Words; David's Mighty Men, [2Sam. 23](#)

N. David's Sin in Taking Census; Chooses Punishment and Buys Threshingfloor of Araunah, [2Sam. 24](#)

Chapter 1

THEME: David mourns the deaths of Saul and Jonathan

In this chapter David mourns the deaths of Saul and Jonathan. The question of who killed Saul may not be answered completely in this chapter, but another suspect is added. A young Amalekite, who came out of the camp of Israel, reported to David the death of Saul and claimed credit for slaying him. David executed the young man for the crime. David's grief over the deaths of Saul and Jonathan is touching, poetic, and dramatic. It is a striking lamentation.

Here we are introduced to another suspect in the death of Saul.

Now it came to pass after the death of Saul, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites, and David had abode two days in Ziklag;

It came even to pass on the third day, that, behold, a man came out of the camp from Saul with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head: and so it was, when he came to David, that he fell to the earth, and did obeisance [\[2Sam. 1:1-2\]](#).

This was a dark day in the history of Israel. War and defeat had come to these people because they were out of the will of God. There is a lesson for us in this. At the end of World War II we thought we had brought peace to the world, and we expected to rest on our laurels from then on and to enjoy life in sin, far from God. That, I am sure, is one of the reasons the world has not had a day of peace since the end of World War II. It has been continual war for us ever since. There will be turmoil and warfare for a nation, a people, or an individual who is out of the will of God. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" ([Isa. 57:21](#)). Isaiah said that three times. I wonder if that might not be applicable to us today.

As I have said, it was a dark day for Israel. You can see their position, King Saul was dead. Jonathan and his three sons were dead. Israel had lost the battle. The Philistines had taken all the northern area around Galilee, and now they had gained ground in the south.

David did not know what had happened in the battle. He and his men had been recovering their own loved ones from the Amalekite marauders. They had been back in Ziklag for two days without hearing a word. Finally, a man all disheveled, covered with mud and dirt and wearing torn clothes, stumbled into David's camp. He said he had come from the war. He told David that the Philistines had won the war and that Saul was dead. Then he told David what had happened.

And David said unto him, From whence comest thou? And he said unto him, Out of the camp of Israel am I escaped.

And David said unto him, How went the matter? I pray thee, tell me. And he answered, That the people are fled from the battle,

and many of the people also are fallen and dead; and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also.

And David said unto the young man that told him, How knowest thou that Saul and Jonathan his son be dead?

And the young man that told him said, As I happened by chance upon mount Gilboa, behold, Saul leaned upon his spear; and, lo, the chariots and horsemen followed hard after him.

And when he looked behind him, he saw me, and called unto me. And I answered, Here am I.

And he said unto me, Who art thou? And I answered him, I am an Amalekite.

He said unto me again, Stand, I pray thee, upon me, and slay me: for anguish is come upon me, because my life is yet whole in me.

So I stood upon him, and slew him, because I was sure that he could not live after that he was fallen: and I took the crown that was upon his head, and the bracelet that was on his arm, and have brought them hither unto my lord [\[2Sam. 1:3-10\]](#).

Is this Amalekite speaking the truth? Or did he come upon the body of Saul and, finding him dead, take the crown and bracelet and bring them to David? I am of the opinion that when this Amalekite found Saul, after he had fallen on his sword, he was still alive.

When this Amalekite came by, Saul asked him to finish the job. The interesting thing is that this young man confessed to David what he had done, and it sounds as though he expected David to give him a medal for his deed and put him on a life pension.

Then David took hold on his clothes, and rent them; and likewise all the men that were with him:

And they mourned, and wept, and fasted until even, for Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the LORD, and for the house of Israel; because they were fallen by the sword.

And David said unto the young man that told him, Whence art thou? And he answered, I am the son of a stranger, an Amalekite.

And David said unto him, How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand to destroy the LORD's anointed? [\[2Sam. 1:11-14\]](#).

If this man did slay Saul, it was because Saul had disobeyed God when he refused to slay all of the Amalekites back in the Book of 1 Samuel. Had Saul obeyed God, this man would not have been alive to kill him, and perhaps Saul would have survived. David asked this young man how it was that he was unafraid to touch the Lord's anointed. David, you remember, would not take Saul's life even though he had opportunity. It is well sometimes to see things from God's viewpoint. As long as Saul was king, David would not touch him. No one else had better touch him either because God is the one who put the crown on his head, and God should be the one to take it off when the time comes.

There is danger in interfering with God's work. I could tell you some very interesting stories about folk who have attempted to interfere with God's work, God's program, and God's man. God moves in and judges. He has always done it. That is why David said to this young Amalekite, "Weren't you afraid to stretch forth your hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?"

And David called one of the young men, and said, Go near, and fall upon him. And he smote him that he died [[2Sam. 1:15](#)].

David judged the Amalekite for touching the Lord's anointed.

And David said unto him, Thy blood be upon thy head; for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the LORD's anointed [[2Sam. 1:16](#)].

If this man made up his story and confession, it certainly was a fatal thing to do. David told him, "If you have lied to me, then your blood is upon you, because you confessed that you killed the Lord's anointed." I believe the young man really did kill Saul. He did what David would never have done, and David judged him for it.

And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son [[2Sam. 1:17](#)].

David's grief for Saul and Jonathan is revealed here, and it is genuine.

(Also he bade them teach the children of Judah the use of the bow: behold, it is written in the book of Jasher.) [[2Sam. 1:18](#)].

Saul had taught Israel something. He made a contribution. You see, the Israelites had no iron weapons of war, so Saul taught them to be bowmen. The bow and arrow was a formidable weapon. Many of our ancestors would testify to that. The Indians used the bow and arrow to hold back their enemies and win many battles.

The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places: how are the mighty fallen! [[2Sam. 1:19](#)].

His lamentation is written in the poetic form which came so naturally to the "sweet psalmist of Israel."

Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph [[2Sam. 1:20](#)].

"Tell it not in Gath" -- Gath was the capital of the Philistines. "Publish it not in the streets of Askelon." Askelon is in the Gaza strip and is one of the five cities of the Philistines.

Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain, upon you, nor fields of offerings: for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed with oil.

From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not back, and the sword of Saul returned not empty [[2Sam. 1:21-22](#)].

No one could say that either Saul or Jonathan was a coward.

Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided: they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions.

Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with other delights, who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel [[2Sam. 1:23-24](#)].

Saul had brought prosperity to the land.

How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places [[2Sam. 1:25](#)].

David and Jonathan were bosom friends. They loved each other. David's grief is sincere.

I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan; very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women [[2Sam. 1:26](#)].

It is interesting that David says, "passing the love of women," because he was married to Jonathan's sister. Later we will find that she betrays David. I think Michal loved him as a hero in the beginning, but the day came when she despised him.

David was not very successful in his love affairs. Abigail is the only noble woman that I have found in his retinue. I disagree with those who think Bathsheba was outstanding. I do not think she was. Although his relations with her were absolutely David's sin, and God judged him for it, why was she parading around on the roof like that? David had his problems with women, but he could say of Jonathan that he was a man who was true and loyal to him unto death. It is interesting to note that the men who were David's followers were loyal to him through thick and thin. He had that charisma which caused his men to stick with him. David was that type of man.

How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!
[[2Sam. 1:27](#)].

This is a tremendous tribute to Jonathan in particular. David's grief over the deaths of Saul and Jonathan is touching. It is one of the most striking lamentations in the Word of God.

We are going to see in the next chapter that David is made king over Judah. We will also meet Abner, who was Saul's captain. Now, not all of Saul's sons had been killed, though all of them that fought in the battle were killed. But Saul had a younger son named Ish-bosheth. Abner made him king over the eleven remaining tribes and, of course, civil war broke out. David defeated Abner and the army, and after a long civil war had weakened the nation, David finally became king of all twelve tribes. He made Hebron his home at first. Later he moved to Mt. Zion in Jerusalem, which was the place that he loved above all others.

We are coming to a section that is historical. Although many people find it uninteresting, we are going to find some of the most thrilling accounts in the entire Word of God in this section. Also we find some marvelous spiritual lessons there.

CHAPTERS 2 AND 3

Chapter 2

THEME: David made king over Judah

David, by God's direction, goes up to Hebron where he is made king over the tribe of Judah. Abner, the captain of Saul's army, makes Saul's son Ish-bosheth the king over the other eleven tribes of Israel. Civil war ensues.

And it came to pass after this, that David inquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah? And the LORD said unto him, Go up. And David said, Whither shall I go up? And he said, Unto Hebron [2Sam. 2:1].

"After this" refers to the time after the deaths of Saul and Jonathan and the period of mourning for them. Now that Saul is out of the picture, David wants to know what to do. He asks the Lord, "Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah?" Why did he ask that question? He is in Philistine country. Saul is dead, and David is to be the next king. What should his next move be? He waited until he received his instructions from the Lord. David had learned that he must wait on the Lord for direction.

God told him to go up to Hebron. Hebron is located in the south of the land, not too far from the Philistine border. God is telling him to move cautiously. He is not to go up and arbitrarily take over Israel, but to move up into the land to make himself available.

So David went up thither, and his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelite, and Abigail Nabal's wife the Carmelite [2Sam. 2:2].

When David headed for Hebron, he took with him the two women who were his wives at this time. Perhaps you are asking, "Does God approve of a man having two wives?" No. This matter will cause David a great deal of trouble -- and later he will have other wives.

And his men that were with him did David bring up, every man with his household: and they dwelt in the cities of Hebron [2Sam. 2:3].

David's loyal followers came with him and settled their families in the cities of Hebron.

And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. And they told David, saying, That the men of Jabesh-gilead were they that buried Saul [2Sam. 2:4].

Now that David has made himself available, the men of his own tribe come to anoint him king over Judah.

And David sent messengers unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, and said unto them, Blessed be ye of the LORD, that ye have shewed

this kindness unto your lord, even unto Saul, and have buried him [2Sam. 2:5].

David does a very wise thing. The men who buried Saul were devoted to him, and now David thanks them for it. David has a great respect for the anointed of the Lord -- he had two opportunities to slay him and make himself king, but he did not do it. David's good points are often passed over, because his sin seems to obscure them. It is like a cloud that covers the sky and shuts out the sunshine of his life. In many respects David was a wonderful man. Afterward he paid for his great sin every day of his life.

David complimented the men of Jabesh-gilead.

And now the LORD shew kindness and truth unto you: and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing.

Therefore now let your hands be strengthened, and be ye valiant: for your master Saul is dead, and also the house of Judah have anointed me king over them [2Sam. 2:6-7].

Then he asked for their support and devotion to him as king, even as they had given it to Saul. Notice that he is moving in a diplomatic and commendable manner at this time. We should recognize the fact that both Saul and Jonathan had sons, and one of them would have been the normal one to come to the throne had not God intervened. Abner, who had been captain of Saul's hosts, moved immediately to make one of them king. Notice what he did.

But Abner the son of Ner, captain of Saul's host, took Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and brought him over to Mahanaim;

And made him king over Gilead, and over the Ashurites, and over Jezreel, and over Ephraim, and over Benjamin, and over all Israel [2Sam. 2:8-9].

Here is the beginning of the division of the kingdom which will come after the reign of Solomon when Jeroboam leads a rebellion. This is the first fracture. At first David is made king over the southern kingdom of Judah, but the northern tribes make Ish-bosheth, a son of Saul, their king.

Ish-bosheth Saul's son was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and reigned two years. But the house of Judah followed David.

And the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months [2Sam. 2:10-11].

This was an interval of civil war: war between the northern kingdom and David's kingdom, Judah, in the south. It depleted the resources and energy of the nation. It was indeed a tragic thing.

And Abner the son of Ner, and the servants of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon.

And Joab the son of Zeruiah, and the servants of David, went out, and met together by the pool of Gibeon: and they sat down, the

one on the one side of the pool, and the other on the other side of the pool [2Sam. 2:12-13].

Abner and Joab were attempting to negotiate a solution to prevent civil war. But as you well know (and certainly we in this country ought to know by now), when you have folk on one side who are determined on one course and people on the other side who are determined on another course, negotiation is practically valueless. It is generally an exercise in futility, and that is what happens here.

And Abner said to Joab, Let the young men now arise, and play before us. And Joab said, Let them arise.

Then there arose and went over by number twelve of Benjamin, which pertained to Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and twelve of the servants of David.

And they caught every one his fellow by the head, and thrust his sword in his fellow's side; so they fell down together: wherefore that place was called Helkath-hazzurim, which is in Gibeon [2Sam. 2:14-16].

Abner said, "Let the young men come together in battle." Joab agreed. This was the way they were going to settle the issue.

And there was a very sore battle that day; and Abner was beaten, and the men of Israel, before the servants of David [2Sam. 2:17].

David is a veteran of many campaigns now. He is not the innocent little shepherd we met at first. He has spent time hiding in the caves and dens of the earth, and he has collected men of war around him. He is rugged and adept at this type of warfare. So his men are able to win a victory over Abner and his "host," an army of superior numbers.

Now I want to call your attention to something that took place which will play a prominent part later on. Abner was followed by Asahel. Asahel was a brother of Joab, who was David's captain. Abner was Saul's captain.

And there were three sons of Zeruiah there, Joab, and Abishai, and Asahel: and Asahel was as light of foot as a wild roe [2Sam. 2:18].

Zeruriah, by the way, was a sister of David. She had three outstanding sons.

And Asashel pursued after Abner; and in going he turned not to the right hand nor to the left from following Abner [2Sam. 2:19].

Asahel took out after Abner. He is not a match for him at all, and Abner warns him.

And Abner said again to Asahel, Turn thee aside from following me: wherefore should I smite thee to the ground? how then should I hold up my face to Joab thy brother?

Howbeit he refused to turn aside: wherefore Abner with the hinder end of the spear smote him under the fifth rib, that the spear came out behind him; and he fell down there, and died in the same place: and it came to pass, that as many as came to the place where Asahel fell down and died stood still [2Sam. 2:22-23].

Abner warned him to stop his pursuit. Asahel refused, and finally Abner turned around and drove a spear through him. Abner killed the brother of Joab. That means that in Joab's heart there will be bitterness, hatred, and the desire to get revenge. His revenge will come later, as we shall see.

And they took up Asahel, and buried him in the sepulchre of his father, which was in Beth-lehem. And Joab and his men went all night, and they came to Hebron at break of day [2Sam. 2:32].

Asahel's funeral closes this chapter. After the funeral Joab and his men "went all night" and came to Hebron at the break of day. They reported to David all that had taken place.

Chapter 3

Civil War Continues (3:1-5)

Chapter 3 continues the account of the long civil war that weakened the nation. Gradually David gained in strength. Abner, after a falling-out with Ish-bosheth, deserted to David. Joab, David's captain, suspected Abner and, seeking revenge for his brother Asahel's death, murdered him.

Now there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David: but David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker [2Sam. 3:1].

The condition of the land is one of internal strife. There is civil war. The nation's energies are being depleted, and their resources are being exhausted. David has been in Hebron for seven and one-half years.

And unto David were sons born in Hebron: and his firstborn was Amnon, of Ahinoam the Jezreelite;

And his second, Chileab, of Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite; and the third, Absalom the son of Maacah the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur;

And the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; and the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital;

And the sixth, Ithream, by Eglah David's wife. These were born to David in Hebron [2Sam. 3:2-5].

You can see that David had more than two wives. He had others, and this will cause a great problem for David. God did not approve, and David did not get by with this.

Among the list of David's sons is one by the name of Absalom. I am sure you are familiar with his story. Later on we will see him lead a rebellion against David. This is the son that David apparently wanted to follow him as king, but he was brutally killed by Joab in battle. It broke David's heart when he was slain. Who is the mother of Absalom? Maacah who was the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur. Who was the king of Geshur? If you go back to [1Samuel 27:8](#), you will find that David and his men invaded the Geshurites, and the Gezrites, and the Amalekites. I believe David was wrong in doing this. He slew these people, including the king of Geshur, and apparently took his daughter captive. She eventually became his wife. They had a son, and it was this young man who led the

rebellion against David. My friend, God saw to it that David did not get away with his sin. It is important for us to note this.

Abner Joins With David (3:7-16)

This chapter tells us about a long period of civil war that in many ways is uninteresting as far as you and I are concerned. Abner, who had been the chief captain of Saul's army, had pushed Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, onto the throne. Being an older man who had had such a high position, he was not apt to listen to the young king. He did something he should not have done.

And Saul had a concubine, whose name was Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah: and Ish-bosheth said to Abner, Wherfore hast thou gone in unto my father's concubine?

Then was Abner very wroth for the words of Ish-bosheth, and said, Am I a dog's head, which against Judah do shew kindness this day unto the house of Saul thy father, to his brethren, and to his friends, and have not delivered thee into the hand of David, that thou chargest me to-day with a fault concerning this woman?

[2Sam. 3:7-8].

It was the exclusive right of the man who was the successor to the throne to cohabit with the deceased king's concubines. Abner infringed on the rights of Ish-bosheth and became angry when the king rebuked him for taking Rizpah, one of Saul's concubines, into his own harem. Candidly, the young king was justified in rebuking Abner, but Abner became so enraged that he immediately began to make overtures to David.

So do God to Abner, and more also, except, as the Lord hath sworn to David, even so I do to him;

To translate the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan even to Beer-sheba.

And he could not answer Abner a word again, because he feared him [2Sam. 3:9-11].

In other words, Abner made known his intention of abandoning the house of Saul and allying himself with David. He was going to help David become king over the twelve tribes. Now Ish-bosheth did not say a word to Abner. He was a son of Saul, but he had no army and no training whatsoever. He was not a warrior like his brother Jonathan. He had been brought up in the king's palace. And he feared Abner.

And Abner sent messengers to David on his behalf, saying, Whose is the land? saying also, Make thy league with me, and, behold, my hand shall be with thee, to bring about all Israel unto thee.

And he said, Well; I will make a league with thee: but one thing I require of thee, that is, Thou shalt not see my face, except thou first bring Michal Saul's daughter, when thou comest to see my face [2Sam. 3:12-13].

David told Abner he could come only if he brought Saul's daughter, Michal, with him. You remember that Michal was David's first wife. Saul had taken her away from David. Believe me, David had a checkered career. This is the reason he suffered -- he let sin enter his life. But above it all was a faith in God that never failed. He wanted more than all else to have a wonderful relationship with God.

And Ish-bosheth sent, and took her from her husband, even from Phaltiel the son of Laish.

And her husband went with her along weeping behind her to Bahurim. Then said Abner unto him, Go, return. And he returned [2Sam. 3:15-16].

Abner's overture was accepted by David. We will find now that David will become king of all twelve tribes because of Abner's treachery.

Joab Murders Abner (3:27-33)

All of this time Joab has not forgotten that Abner had slain his brother.

And when Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside in the gate to speak with him quietly, and smote him there under the fifth rib, that he died, for the blood of Asahel his brother [2Sam. 3:27].

So Joab avenged his brother's death. When David heard that Joab had murdered Abner, he did not approve of it at all. In fact, he accused Joab of doing a very terrible thing. Concerning Abner's death he said a very interesting thing.

And the king lamented over Abner, and said, Died Abner as a fool dieth? [2Sam. 3:33].

Why did David say that? It certainly is a strange epitaph to give a person. Abner was in Hebron. Hebron was one of the cities of refuge where a murderer was safe. In that city Joab could not have touched him. But Joab quietly took Abner aside and said to him, "Come out here. I want to talk with you. You are the captain on one side, and I am the captain on the other side. It would be nice if we could get together." So Abner stepped outside the city of refuge, and Joab killed him. That is why David said Abner died as a fool dies. He was a fool to leave Hebron.

Isn't that a message for us today? There is a refuge for every sinner in Christ. Regardless of how high a man's IQ is or what his position in life might be, if he is outside the place of refuge, he is lost. If the truth were told at many funerals today, the preachers would have to say about the departed person, "A fool has just died. He would not turn to Jesus Christ who is the place of refuge." Are you resting in Christ?

CHAPTERS 4 AND 5

Chapter 4

THEME: David is made king over all of Israel

Ish-bosheth, The Son Of Saul, Is Killed (4:1-12)

Troubled times for the nation Israel continue in this chapter. Internal strife and civil war followed the deaths of Saul and Jonathan. It was a time of great heartache and heartbreak for God's people.

This section of the Word of God is usually passed over. I am confident, however, that it has been given to us for at least two reasons: (1) To show us the family of the Lord Jesus Christ and to give us His genealogy; and (2) to give us an example. Paul tells us, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition . . ." ([1Cor. 10:11](#)). It has been given to us that it might minister to us in a spiritual way.

We have already seen that there had been a rebellion against David, who had been made king of the tribe of Judah. He had moved to Hebron, which was situated just at the edge of the kingdom in the south. Abner had led a rebellion by putting Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, on the throne. But because Ish-bosheth reprimanded and rebuked him for taking one of Saul's concubines into his own harem, Abner left the house of Saul and allied himself with David. This was a mistake, because Joab was waiting to kill Abner in revenge for the slaying of his brother Asahel.

Now that Ish-bosheth has lost Abner, his military captain, his army is weak. He knows he cannot maintain his kingdom against David without an army. Abner has been murdered. What is he going to do?

And when Saul's son heard that Abner was dead in Hebron, his hands were feeble, and all the Israelites were troubled.

And Saul's son had two men that were captains of bands: the name of the one was Baanah, and the name of the other Rechab, the sons of Rimmon a Beerothite, of the children of Benjamin: (for Beeroth also was reckoned to Benjamin:

And the Beerothites fled to Gittaim, and were sojourners there until this day.) [[2Sam. 4:1-3](#)].

The Beerothites were ejected by Saul and they fled to Gittaim. Beeroth, their town, passed into the possession of Benjamin.

And Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son that was lame of his feet. He was five years old when the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel, and his nurse took him up, and fled: and it came to pass, as she made haste to flee, that he fell, and became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth [[2Sam. 4:4](#)].

Mephibosheth is an unusual name, but please remember it. The story about Mephibosheth and David is one of the most beautiful stories ever told. This boy was Jonathan's son. As long as he lived, he was a constant danger to David because he had throne rights. Since he was Jonathan's son, however, David would never harm a hair of his head. Later on David will go looking for family members of Saul and Jonathan, not to slay them, but to show them kindness.

And the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, went, and came about the heat of the day to the house of Ish-bosheth, who lay on a bed at noon.

And they came thither into the midst of the house, as though they would have fetched wheat; and they smote him under the fifth rib: and Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped [[2Sam. 4:5-6](#)].

These two underlings, Rechab and Baanah, were petty officers under Abner in the army of Saul. When they discovered that Abner was dead -- and they recognized the strength and power of David -- they conspired to put Ish-bosheth, the son of Saul, to death. When Ish-bosheth was in bed, they slipped in upon him and slew him. It was a bloody, ugly thing that they did. It was also a mistake, by the way. By killing this man they expected to make peace with David. In fact, they thought David would reward them for their act.

For when they came into the house, he lay on his bed in his bedchamber, and they smote him, and slew him, and beheaded him, and took his head, and gat them away through the plain all night.

And they brought the head of Ish-bosheth unto David to Hebron, and said to the king, Behold the head of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul thine enemy, which sought thy life; and the LORD hath avenged my lord the king this day of Saul, and of his seed [[2Sam. 4:7-8](#)].

They took the head of Ish-bosheth (imagine that!) to David. David was not about to accept it. David would never approve a thing like that.

And David commanded his young men, and they slew them, and cut off their hands and their feet, and hanged them up over the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ish-bosheth, and buried it in the sepulchre of Abner in Hebron [[2Sam. 4:12](#)].

Rechab and Baanah were murderers -- murderers of a king. David executed them summarily for their dastardly deed.

The eleven tribes in the north recognize that they no longer have any leadership and that it is foolish to carry on rebellion against David at this time. So they attempt to make overtures of peace.

Chapter 5

David Is Made King Over All Of Israel (5:1-5)

Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh [[2Sam. 5:1](#)].

The tribes sent representatives to David. They said, "Behold we are thy bone and thy flesh." That was true. This civil war was terrible, especially because the tribes were fighting each other.

Personally, I think the worst war that this country fought was the Civil War. Looking back at it, that war seemed almost unnecessary. Certainly slavery is wrong, but it should

have been abolished by means other than war. The hotheads and the protesters in that day were the ones who got the country in trouble. That is the reason I am opposed to all hot headed protesters -- regardless of what side they are on. They are typical of the crowd that got this nation into the trouble during the Civil War. Men like General Grant, Abraham Lincoln, and Robert E. Lee simply found themselves in an awkward situation. In the city of Atlanta you can still see the scars of the Civil War.

The nation of Israel, after more than seven years of civil war, is reunited under David. Now it enters the greatest period it has ever enjoyed. This period foreshadows the day when Christ will come and rule.

Also in time past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and the LORD said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel [[2Sam. 5:2](#)].

The tribes are rather late in acknowledging David as the legitimate and God-appointed ruler over them. They should have recognized him long before this, but they did not.

So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a league with them in Hebron before the LORD: and they anointed David king over Israel.

David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years.

In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months: and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah [[2Sam. 5:3-5](#)].

Israel is about to enter its greatest period of prosperity and expansion. David is thirty years old when he begins to reign -- still a young man. He had reigned over the single tribe of Judah for seven years and six months in Hebron. He will reign thirty-three years in Jerusalem over all Israel, all twelve tribes. David will reign for a total of forty years and six months.

David Moves His Capital To Jerusalem (5:6-16)

Notice the first move that David makes to consolidate the kingdom: he moved the capital of Israel from Hebron to Jerusalem.

And the king and his men went to Jerusalem unto the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land: which spake unto David, saying, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither: thinking, David cannot come in hither.

Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion: the same is the city of David [[2Sam. 5:6-7](#)].

Once again, here are men who underestimated David. He was a great military leader, political leader, and king, and most and best of all he was a man of God.

Now Zion was David's favorite spot. Mark that in your Bible. I have marked it in mine. If you have ever been to that land, you will recognize that it is the high point of the city.

Actually, in David's day, Jerusalem was down near the Kidron valley. The walls that surrounded the city in that day have been excavated down in that area. The present city of Jerusalem is nearer Mount Zion, where the palace of David was built. Later on, below Mount Zion, the temple was erected. David chose all of this. Jerusalem was David's city. In many of his psalms he speaks of Mount Zion and Jerusalem. Frankly, it would not be my favorite city. I agree with David on many things, but not on Jerusalem. Pilate hated that city. He went there only during the feast days. That is why he was in Jerusalem when Jesus was arrested; he was there for the Passover. He was there to keep order and, when the Passover was over, he retired to Caesarea, which was located on the Mediterranean. I think I would prefer Caesarea to Jerusalem, too. As far as the Bible is concerned, however, Jerusalem is to be the great capital of this earth. I am delighted to know that I will not be living there throughout eternity. I am going to be in the New Jerusalem, which has a much greater vantage point than the earthly Jerusalem.

We need to note here that "David took the strong hold of Zion." He took the top of the hill and not the city proper. From that vantage point he was able to take this city of the Jebusites. The Jebusites found themselves overwhelmed before they even knew that there was a battle going on.

And David said on that day, Whosoever getteth up to the gutter, and smiteth the Jebusites, and the lame and the blind, that are hated of David's soul, he shall be chief and captain. Wherefore they said, The blind and the lame shall not come into the house [2Sam. 5:8].

This verse is a source of controversy. Some Bible commentators hold that this is David's retort to taunt the Jebusites. Others believe it has a deeper meaning. Since Scripture gives us no explanation, we cannot know the exact meaning.

So David dwelt in the fort, and called it the city of David. And David built round about from Millo and inward [2Sam. 5:9].

David first captured Mount Zion and established it as his fort; then he took the city.

And David went on, and grew great, and the LORD God of hosts was with him.

And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters, and masons: and they built David an house.

And David perceived that the LORD had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake [2Sam. 5:10-12].

He grew great, and God was with him. Hiram, the king of Tyre, recognized that David was an outstanding man, and so he worked out an arrangement with David whereby he supplied materials and workmen to build a palace.

And David took him more concubines and wives out of Jerusalem, after he was come from Hebron: and there were yet sons and daughters born to David [2Sam. 5:13].

That is the record of the facts. God did not put his stamp of approval upon what David did. We will find that God definitely disapproves of polygamy. In David's son Solomon it resulted in the splitting of the kingdom and finally brought on the Babylonian captivity. Why? Because David and Solomon were kings and in places of leadership. Their actions were wrong. Who says they were wrong? God says they were wrong! After all, it is His universe, and He makes the rules. Although you may not like them, God's rules are good. God not only created us, but He laid down rules and regulations for our lives which would bring to the human family the ultimate in happiness and blessing.

And these be the names of those that were born unto him in Jerusalem; Shammuah, and Shobab, and Nathan, and Solomon, Ibhar also, and Elishua, and Nepheg, and Japhia, And Elishama, and Eliada, and Eliphale [2Sam. 5:14-16].

I know nothing about the first two boys mentioned in these verses, but I do know something about Nathan and Solomon. From the line of Nathan came Mary the mother of Jesus. From Solomon came Joseph, Mary's husband. The Lord Jesus Christ received the blood line and the legal title to the throne of David through Nathan and Solomon. That is the reason this information is recorded for us here.

War With The Philistines (5:17-21)

But when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines came up to seek David; and David heard of it, and went down to the hold.

The Philistines also came and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim [2Sam. 5:17-18].

When David was escaping from Saul and went to live in the Philistine country, at least Achish considered David their man. Now that David has returned to his own nation and has been anointed king over all Israel, the Philistines are out to get him.

And David inquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up to the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into mine hand?

And the LORD said unto David, Go up: for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into thine hand.

And David came to Baal-perazim, and David smote them there, and said, The LORD hath broken forth upon mine enemies before me, as the breach of waters. Therefore he called the name of that place Baal-perazim.

And there they left their images, and David and his men burned them [2Sam. 5:19-21].

Some time after this defeat, the Philistines returned. Again God delivered them into David's hand. Throughout David's reign there never was any peace with this enemy.

Chapter 6

THEME: David's wrong and right attempts to bring the ark to Jerusalem

In this chapter David does a right thing in a wrong way. He tried to bring up the ark to Zion on a cart, although God had given explicit directions for moving it. The Kohathites of the tribe of Levi were to carry the ark on their shoulders ([Num. 7:9](#)). Uzzah was smitten dead because he should have known better than to touch it. "Hands off" was made abundantly clear in God's instructions concerning the ark. David then brought the ark up in a right way. Michal rebukes David for his enthusiasm and devotion to God in bringing up the ark.

This chapter can be labeled, "Doing a Right Thing in a Wrong Way." I suppose this would be another way of putting the negative in that ancient epigram, "The end justifies the means." There have been many organizations and individuals who have used that as their philosophy of life. I do not mean to suggest that this was David's philosophy of life - - it was not -- but as far as this particular incident in chapter 6 is concerned, it was certainly true. I believe this is a page from one of the greatest days in the life of David.

Suppose you wanted to choose the greatest day in the life of David. What day would you choose? Would it be the day that Samuel poured the anointing oil on him as a young shepherd boy? How about the day that he slew the giant Goliath? Certainly his first romance with Michal, Saul's daughter, who was given to him in marriage, deserves consideration. Perhaps you might choose the day David escaped from Saul. Then again you might choose the day Saul died, because that meant that David would ascend the throne. You might think it was the day that he was made king of all Israel and the crown was placed upon his head. You might even want to suggest it was the day his son Absalom rebelled against him and was slain. Or perhaps you might choose the day his son Solomon was anointed king. All of these were great days in the life of a great man.

However, I believe there are two events that stand out above all others in the life of David: the day that David brought the ark of God to Jerusalem (recorded in ch. 6) and the day David purposed in his heart to build God a house (recorded in ch. 7). These are probably the two greatest days in David's life.

Now the ark of the covenant denoted the presence of God among His people. If you are not acquainted with the floor plan of the tabernacle, I would like to recommend my book about the tabernacle entitled God's Portrait of Christ. I emphasize the articles of furniture and their location in the tabernacle and then in the temple. In the outer court was the burnt altar and the brazen laver. Sin was dealt with there. Then there was the Holy Place which contained three articles of furniture, all of which spoke of worship and the person of Christ: the golden lampstand, the golden altar, and the table of showbread. Then inside the Holy of Holies was the ark and over it the mercy seat. This was where God met with His people. The ark is possibly the best picture of Christ we have in the Old Testament. It is the only picture, actually, that God ever painted.

Personally I do not care for the paintings of Christ, especially the way the artists of the Middle Ages pictured Him. No one knows how the Lord Jesus looked. There are those who say He was a white man, some say He was a black man, and others say He was a swarthy man with a dark complexion. Probably His skin was bronze, but we don't know because we have not been told. There is a picture of Him, however, in the tabernacle and

especially in the ark, which was just a box made of acacia wood, of precise dimensions, and overlaid with gold inside and outside. Bezaleel was given a special ministry by the Spirit of God that he might make the ark. The ark, denoting the presence of God, became a hindrance to Israel because they looked upon it in a superstitious way. They thought there was some merit in that box, and there was not. It was just a symbol, a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was made of gold, which speaks of His deity, and of wood, which speaks of His humanity. It was not two boxes; it was one box. It was a wooden box; it was a gold box. It was both. As such, it was a marvelous example of the hypostatistical union of Jesus Christ. He is the God-man, or as one of the oldest creeds says: He is very man of very man, and He is very God of very God.

You will recall that during the time of Samuel the Philistines captured the ark and became very superstitious about it. They sent it back to Israel on a wagon and left it in the field of Abinadab. It stayed in that area for seventy years. When David captured Jerusalem, he wanted to move the ark up there because he felt that was the proper place for it, and apparently it was the place which God had chosen. One of the things the king was told was, "Three times a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose . . ." ([Deut. 16:16](#)). When David took Jerusalem, he made it the capital -- and in Kirjath-jearim, eight miles west of Jerusalem, was the ark.

David had a passion and love for God that is seldom found today. I do not go along with these folk who are everlastingly criticizing David. I only wish in my own heart that I had that love and passion for God that he had. Listen to what he says in [Psalm 9:1](#): "I will praise thee, O LORD, with my whole heart. . . ." David expressed his devotion from the depths of his heart in a most wonderful way. In [Psalm 108:1](#) he declared, "O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise, even with my glory." Then in [Psalm 103:1](#) he says, "Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name." What a passion and love for God this man had! That is why he wanted to bring the ark of God to Jerusalem. We will see in this chapter that he will attempt to do it, but he goes about it in the wrong way.

The ark is mentioned fifteen times in the first seventeen verses. After you read this section (and I hope that you will read it carefully), you realize that the subject is the ark of the Lord. It seemed to be a rather important subject to David and to the Lord.

At least eleven of the psalms were composed around the great event of bringing the ark to Jerusalem. You can be sure of one thing: David did not have some peculiar superstition about the ark. He knew where the Lord was, and he knew He was not in that box. In [Psalm 123:1](#) David says, "Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens." David knew where God was, but he knew that the approach to God was made through the ark which spoke of a mediator between God and man.

This has been a rather lengthy introduction, because I believe this is an important chapter. Now notice what David wants to do.

[Again, David gathered together all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand.](#)

[And David arose, and went with all the people that were with him from Baale of Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God,](#)

whose name is called by the name of the LORD of hosts that dwelleth between the cherubims.

And they set the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that was in Gibeah: and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drove the new cart [[2Sam. 6:1-3](#)].

This is where David made his mistake. God had given specific instructions about moving the tabernacle and its furniture, but David did not follow those instructions. Someone might say, "Well, the Philistines didn't either, and they got away with it." They got away with it because they were ignorant. Light creates responsibility. If men have the light of the gospel, they are held responsible for rejecting it. I am not going to argue with you about the heathen in Africa, but I would like to argue with you about the heathen in my town and your town because they can hear the gospel, and their responsibility is great. If you turn your back on Jesus Christ, my friend, you can argue about the heathen all you want to, but you are lost and doomed and judged and are bound for eternal hell. That is the teaching of the Word of God. You may not like it; and, if you don't, you ought to move out of this universe into another one. This is God's universe and these are His rules.

So David goes to bring up the ark to Jerusalem, but he does it in the wrong way. The ark was constructed with rings on the four corners. Staves were put through those rings, and the ark was carried on the shoulders of the Levites. On the wilderness march the Kohathites put that ark on their shoulders and carried it. David simply did not follow God's instructions.

Friend, in just such a way God wants the gospel to go out today. I sometimes wonder why He doesn't get a better instrument than I am and why He doesn't write the gospel in the skies. But Jesus Christ has to be carried through this world on the shoulders of those who are His own. That is God's way of doing it today. That was God's way of doing it in David's day. David was wrong, so wrong. He is going to get into trouble, just as God's people today get in trouble when they do wrong.

And David and all the house of Israel played before the LORD on all manner of instruments made of fir wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals [[2Sam. 6:5](#)].

David was a musician. He believed in having lots of music, and he is going to bring the ark to Jerusalem with a great deal of it.

And when they came to Nachon's threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it.

And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God [[2Sam. 6:6-7](#)].

This is a pretty serious situation. The ark was on the cart, and the oxen were shaking the cart. When Uzzah tried to steady the ark with his hand, the Lord smote him and he died. Some might say that it was a small breach of conduct for such extreme punishment. Uzzah's death so affected David that he stopped the procession and left the ark in the

house of Obed-edom the Gittite. David was shaken and angry with the Lord. The Lord was angry too. God was angry because David was moving the ark in the wrong way.

And David was displeased, because the LORD had made a breach upon Uzzah: and he called the name of the place Perez-uzzah to this day.

And David was afraid of the LORD that day, and said, How shall the ark of the LORD come to me? [\[2Sam. 6:8-9\]](#).

You and I would do well, friend, to be afraid of the Lord. [Psalm 111:10](#) tells us that "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom. . . ." Many people need to recognize that fact today. God is going to judge. I do not know about you, but I am a little weary of hearing all this love, love, lovey-dovey stuff. Sure, God is love. Certainly God loves you, but you can go on in sin, you can turn your back on Him, and you are lost. There is no way out of it. There is no other alternative. [John 14:6](#) says, ". . . I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Jesus Christ spoke those words, and they are truth. We should fear Him and do as He tells us to do. David was afraid of the Lord that day, and he finally asked, "How shall the ark of the LORD come to me?"

So David would not remove the ark of the LORD unto him into the city of David: but David carried it aside into the house of Obed-edom the Gittite.

And the ark of the LORD continued in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months: and the LORD blessed Obed-edom, and all his household.

And it was told king David, saying, The LORD hath blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that pertaineth unto him, because of the ark of God. So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David with gladness [\[2Sam. 6:10-12\]](#).

He was determined to bring the ark to the city of David. Has he learned his lesson? How is he going to bring it up now? On the shoulders of the priests.

And it was so, that when they that bare the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, he sacrificed oxen and fatlings.

And David danced before the LORD with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod [\[2Sam. 6:13-14\]](#).

I know there are going to be many arched eyebrows at the fact that David danced, but God is the One who put it in His Word. David danced by himself. It had nothing in the world to do with sex. Any kind of a dance today (and I do not care how you try to cover it up with culture and refinement) is a sex dance. David's dance was one of worship. Now if you could have a worshipful dance, I would be all for it, but I don't think you can, my friend. I do not find people in love with God like this man David was. David is rejoicing before God. Personally, I would like to see more people rejoicing and praising God today. I am concerned when I see believers with long faces. God doesn't like it, my friend. We are to come into His presence with joy. David did, you may be sure of that.

So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet.

And as the ark of the LORD came into the city of David, Michal Saul's daughter looked through a window, and saw king David leaping and dancing before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart [[2Sam. 6:15-16](#)].

Michal did not like to see anyone who was in love with God like that, and she despised David for it. Remember, Michal is David's wife. Her attitude is a very serious thing as far as her relationship with David is concerned.

And they brought in the ark of the LORD, and set it in his place, in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it: and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD [[2Sam. 6:17](#)].

Those burnt offerings speak of the person of Christ. The peace offerings speak of the peace that He made by the blood of His cross and of the relationship -- the wonderful relationship -- which was between God and David.

My friend, let's push aside the extraneous arguments we hear about David's dancing before the Lord and about Uzzah being smitten dead. The record is here in the Word of God; let's accept it as it is written. The important thing is to see the lesson that is here for us. What about your relationship to God? Let me give a personal testimony at this point. Driving down to the office this morning, feeling rather weary since I have just returned from a trip, I thanked God that He had brought me to another day. I thanked Him that I've confessed all my sins and am in a right relationship with Him. And I told Him that I love Him. How He deserves our love and adoration! The important thing to see in this chapter is David's relationship with God. Here is a man who is in love with his God. He is rightly related to Him and thrilled to be able to serve Him. Oh, that you and I might have the same joy of the Lord in our lives!

Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, How glorious was the king of Israel to-day, who uncovered himself to-day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself! [[2Sam. 6:20](#)].

David "uncovered himself" in the sense that he took off his royal garments which set him apart as the king. He mingled and mixed with the people, and thanked God, and rejoiced in the fact that the ark was being brought to the city of David. Michal did not like that. She liked dignity and reverence in worship. I am always afraid of these super-duper pious folk who talk everlasting about dedication and piety. Watch those folk, my friend. They are dangerous. I fear them like David did. What a man of God he was!

And David said unto Michal, It was before the LORD, which chose me before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel: therefore will I play before the LORD [[2Sam. 6:21](#)].

David is saying, "Because God chose me, I will rejoice." My, I wish folk had a better time when they went to church. They would enjoy the services more.

And I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight: and of the maidservants which thou hast spoken of, of them shall I be had in honour [[2Sam. 6:22](#)].

When he says he will make himself "more vile," he means that he will come down to the level of the most humble worshiper. He doesn't mind being informal in his worship of God.

Because of her attitude, David "put her aside." That is, he became permanently estranged from her, and she was childless. Obviously, Michal did not share David's love and enthusiasm for God.

Chapter 7

THEME: God's covenant to build the house of David

God's covenant with David makes this one of the great chapters of the Bible. The message of the Bible from this point on rests upon this promise that God makes to David. David desired deeply to build a temple to house the ark of God, and Nathan the prophet concurred with him in the plan. God appeared to Nathan to correct him, for God would not let David build the temple because he was "a bloody man." However, God gave him credit for his desire, and in turn He promised to build David a house. God promised a king and a kingdom to come in the line of David. He was referring not only to Solomon but to Christ, great David's greater Son, and His eternal Kingdom. God confirmed this promise with an oath ([Ps. 89:34-37](#)). David understood that a King was coming in his line who would be more than a man.

Frankly, it is very difficult to understand the prophets from this point on without knowing about this covenant. One of the reasons many people find themselves so hopelessly confused in the study of prophecy is because they do not pay attention to a chapter like this. [2Samuel 7](#) is by far the most significant chapter thus far in the Old Testament. The New Testament opens with: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David. . . ." That is important because the promises God made to David are to be fulfilled in prophecy.

When the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary, he said, ". . . Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shall call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David" ([Luke 1:30-32](#)). You see, God is fulfilling His promise to David.

Peter began in [2Samuel 7](#) when he preached on the day of Pentecost: "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he

would raise up Christ to sit on his throne" ([Acts 2:29-30](#); see also [Acts 2:25-31, 34-36](#)). Peter is making reference to that which God promised to David.

Paul, in the Book of Romans, says, "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh" ([Rom. 1:1-3](#)).

The New Testament closes with the Lord Jesus Christ saying, "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star" ([Rev. 22:16](#)). These are only a few of the fifty-nine references to David in the New Testament.

The Old Testament prophets based their message of the kingdom on the promise God gave to David in [2Samuel 7](#). You will find that each of the Old Testament prophets goes back to David and God's promises to him concerning the kingdom. After all, what is the Kingdom of Heaven but the kingdom that God vouchsafed to David? For example, listen to [Jeremiah 23:5](#), "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth." The Kingdom became the theme song of the prophets.

David's Desire To Build The Temple (7:1-17)

And it came to pass, when the king sat in his house, and the LORD had given him rest round about from all his enemies;

That the king said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains.

And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that is in thine heart; for the LORD is with thee [[2Sam. 7:1-3](#)].

Let us look at the background of these verses. We have seen that David took Jerusalem and made it his capital. Then Hiram, the king of Tyre, built David a palace on Mount Zion. Finally David brought the ark up to the city of Jerusalem. One night when David was in his palace, he began to think about the ark. I think it must have been a rainy night in Jerusalem. The first night I ever spent in that city, it rained, and I thought, It must have been a rainy night when David awakened and heard the pitter-patter of rain on that lovely palace that his friend Hiram had built for him. Then he thought of God's ark in a tent. Perhaps he could even hear the flapping of the tent, and he thought, I want to build God a house.

David called in Nathan, his prophet, and divulged to him the desires of his heart. He said, "I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains." Nathan told David to go ahead with his plans. And here is a case where a prophet was wrong, and I mean wrong. Nathan said, "Go, do all that is in thine heart; for the LORD is with thee." I would have said the same thing. The fact of the matter is, if someone came to me and said, "Dr. McGee, we want to underwrite your radio ministry on a certain station," I'll be frank with you, I would not say, "Well, let me go and pray about this and see whether this is what ought to be done." I would say, "Yes, this is what we want." But my decision might not be the will of God. I understand how Nathan felt. David's plans sounded good.

Nathan could not think of anything better than building a house for God. But he was wrong. David, as we have indicated before, was a bloody man. Long before he committed his great sin, he was a bloody man. God said, "You cannot build me a temple." It was in the heart of David, however, and God gives him credit for it. I think we make a mistake by calling it Solomon's temple, because it was David who gathered all of the materials and made all of the arrangements with the contractor. Solomon just carried out the plans. The only temple Solomon ever had was on the side of his head. It should be called David's temple.

And it came to pass that night, that the word of the LORD came unto Nathan, saying,

Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the LORD, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in?

Whereas I have not dwelt in any house since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle [[2Sam. 7:4-6](#)].

God had to correct Nathan. God said to him, "You are going to have to correct the word you gave to David. You go tell David that I appreciate the fact that he wants to build Me a house. I never asked him to do it. I never asked any of My people to build Me a house." God had met with His people in a tent. In other words, God identified Himself with His people. That is why 1900 years ago Jesus Christ came to earth and took upon Himself our humanity. John says, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" ([John 1:14](#)). That word dwelt means "pitched His tent" here among us. Instead of meeting man in a flimsy tent made of linen, God met man in a flimsy tent made of flesh. He came to earth and identified Himself with us. God has always identified Himself with His people.

In all the places wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye not me an house of cedar? [[2Sam. 7:7](#)].

In other words, building the temple was David's idea -- not God's commandment. God gives him credit for building the temple.

Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the sheepridge, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel [[2Sam. 7:8](#)].

God says, "You were a little shepherd boy when I chose you. And I've made you ruler over My people."

And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth [[2Sam. 7:9](#)].

In God's book David ranks as one of the greatest men who has lived on this earth. Compare David with any man who has ever ruled, and he is outstanding. If I understand the prophets correctly, it is God's intention, when David is raised from the dead in the resurrection, to let him rule on this earth as regent to the Lord Jesus Christ during the Millennium.

Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime [[2Sam. 7:10](#)].

This is what God is going to do. Notice the "I will's" of God. (1) "I will appoint a place for my people Israel; (2) I will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more." Friend, that was a long time ago -- actually, God said this over three thousand years ago, and it has not yet come to pass. But God is going to make good His promise.

And as since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the LORD telleth thee that he will make thee an house [[2Sam. 7:11](#)].

God says to Nathan, "You go tell David that I will make him a house." David said, "I want to build God a house." God says, "David, you can't do it. Your hands are bloody. You can't build Me a house, but I know the desire is in your heart. I will give you credit for building Me a house, and I will build you a house." Isn't that just like the Lord? You can't out do the Lord, friend.

One of the reasons so many of us are so poor today is because we do so little for the Lord. We never get in a position where He can do much for us. We can learn a lesson from David. David wanted to do something great for God and God did something far greater for him.

And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom [[2Sam. 7:12](#)].

This is tremendous! We have read from the New Testament that the Lord Jesus Christ was made of the seed of David ([Rom. 1:3](#)). God said to David, "I am going to set up thy seed after thee, and He will establish the Kingdom." God was not talking about Solomon. God was referring to the Lord Jesus Christ.

He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever [[2Sam. 7:13](#)].

Solomon is the subject here; he is the next in line. The Kingdom, however, goes beyond Solomon and looks on to the future. "I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever." This speaks of the throne of David. The Lord Jesus Christ will one day sit on the throne of David. That was the angel Gabriel's message to Mary. He said, "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David" ([Luke 1:32](#)).

I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men [[2Sam. 7:14](#)].

Listen again to God's "I will." In a unique way God says, "I will be his father." At His resurrection the Lord Jesus Christ said to Mary Magdalene, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" ([John 20:17](#)). God is the Father of Jesus Christ because of His position in the Trinity. God is my Father by regeneration -- "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" ([John 1:12](#)). When I received Christ as my Savior, He gave me the right (the exousia) to become His son. That right is given to those who do neither more nor less than simply believe in His name. God says, "I will be his father, and he shall be my son."

The last part of [verse 14](#) is a very strange statement. "If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men." Bishop Horsley gives an interesting translation of this: "When guilt is laid upon him, I will chasten him with the rod of men." That is exactly what God is saying now. God says, "When guilt is laid upon Him, I am going to be His Father, and He will be My Son." That is the unique relationship between God the Father and God the Son. But "if he commit iniquity," that is, when iniquity is laid upon Him -- when your sin and my sin were put upon Him -- it is with His stripes that we are healed. He died on the Cross for you and me. He was delivered for our offenses. That is the reason He died on the Cross. "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" ([1Pet. 2:24](#)) -- healed from sin. Isaiah the prophet says concerning Christ, "Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief . . ." ([Isa. 53:10](#)). The One coming in David's line would bear the sins of the world. Isaiah continues to speak of the Lord Jesus when he says, "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" ([Isa. 53:4-6](#)). "With his stripes we are healed." Healed of what? We are healed of sin. Sin is the awful disease that afflicts mankind, my beloved. That is why God says, "I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men."

[But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee \[\[2Sam. 7:15\]\(#\)\].](#)

In other words, though the line of David sinned grievously, God would carry through to the end of His purpose with David and his line. And God did just that. He brought the Lord Jesus Christ into the world.

[And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever \[\[2Sam. 7:16\]\(#\)\].](#)

God considered this important because [Psalm 89:34-37](#) says, "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness

that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah."

"Established for ever as the moon." Scientists are saying, after studying the rocks brought back from the moon, that the universe is probably from three to five billion years old -- that's a long time. God said He would establish David's throne just as He established the moon. God made a covenant with David, and He will not break it.

According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David [[2Sam. 7:17](#)].

David's Prayer (7:18-25)

Then went king David in, and sat before the LORD, and he said,
Who am I, O Lord GOD? and what is my house, that thou hast
brought me hitherto?

And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord GOD; but thou
hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come.
And is this the manner of man, O Lord GOD? [[2Sam. 7:18-19](#)].

Once again consider Bishop Horsley's translation of this verse: "O Lord God, thou hast spoken of your servant's house for a great while to come, and hast regarded me in the arrangement about the man that is to be from above, O God Jehovah." That is a remarkable statement. They were looking for One to come. He was to be of the seed of the woman. He was to be from Abraham; He was to come from the tribe of Judah; now we are told that He will be in the family of David. David is overwhelmed by the fact that Jesus Christ will be in his line.

And what can David say more unto thee? for thou, Lord GOD,
knowest thy servant [[2Sam. 7:20](#)].

Have you ever poured out your heart to God until you didn't have anything left to say? That was David's state. He had poured out his heart and was empty; he was just sitting there before Him. I like to pray while I am driving alone in my car. I tell Him everything in my heart until I can't even think of anything else to say. How wonderful He is. How wonderful is our God.

For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou
done all these great things, to make thy servant know them
[[2Sam. 7:21](#)].

Did God do all of this for David because he was a nice boy? He wasn't a nice boy, friend, as we are going to see. Neither did God save you or me because we were nice girls or boys. He saved us because of His marvelous, infinite grace. He does so many special things for us, not because of our goodness, but because of His goodness. He is wonderful. We are not. We ought to praise His name. David is overwhelmed by what God has told him. It is no wonder that he could sing those beautiful psalms.

Wherefore thou art great, O LORD God: for there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears [[2Sam. 7:22](#)].

Doesn't this verse do you good just to read it? My, what a privilege to have a God like this!

And now, O LORD God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said [[2Sam. 7:25](#)].

Did you know that this became David's salvation? Listen to what he says in [2Samuel 23:5](#), "Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow." David rested upon what God had promised.

God has also made a promise to you. It is recorded in [John 3:16](#). It says, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Will you believe God? David believed God. Also we have seen that Abraham believed God. Moses believed God. Joshua believed God. And He wants you to believe God. Whatever your name is, He is saying to you today, "Believe Me. I'll save you if you will trust Christ as your Savior." That is His covenant with you and with me.

CHAPTERS 8--10

Chapter 8

THEME: David consolidates his kingdom

Now that David has established Jerusalem as his capital and has brought the ark of God there, he consolidates his kingdom and befriends the only living son of Jonathan, Mephibosheth. Also he gains victories over the old enemies of Israel and enlarges Israel's borders.

David Consolidates His Kingdom (8:1-15)

And after this it came to pass, that David smote the Philistines, and subdued them: and David took Metheg-ammah out of the hand of the Philistines [[2Sam. 8:1](#)].

The "after this" refers to the time after God made His covenant with David. David is now being fully established in the kingdom, and we find that he has a great victory over the Philistines. They were the perpetual and inveterate enemies of Israel. David drives them back, not only out of the land of Israel, but even beyond their own borders. The Philistines inhabited a great section of that land, especially in the southern part.

In recounting David's conquest of the king of Zobah, it is said:

And David took from him a thousand chariots, and seven hundred horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen: and David hocked all the

chariot horses, but reserved of them for an hundred chariots
[[2Sam. 8:4](#)].

Hadadezer, the king of Zobah, had a kingdom that went as far as the river Euphrates. We are told that David took a thousand chariots from him. David got rid of all but a few of the horses. In the Book of Deuteronomy God made a rule for the kings that they were not to multiply horses or wives. Although David multiplied wives (Solomon multiplied both horses and wives), he is apparently trying to follow the Lord's instructions in this matter concerning the horses.

There is a great deal of detail in this chapter. If you like to explore new areas and new lands, you will enjoy studying this chapter and tracing on a map the different areas in which David moved. He enlarged the borders of Israel. He extended them to the south in the land of the Philistines, and to the east in the land of the Moabites. He established garrisons in Syria and Edom. So we find that Syria, Moab, Ammon, the Philistines, and the Amalekites all became subject to David and apparently paid tribute.

And David gat him a name when he returned from smiting of the Syrians in the valley of salt, being eighteen thousand men.

And he put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom put he garrisons, and all they of Edom became David's servants. And the LORD preserved David withersoever he went [[2Sam. 8:13-14](#)].

In the southwest, the southeast, and now to the north, David was able to push back the borders of Israel and enlarge the kingdom. There is no use to say that the borders were enlarged in the west because the border in the west was the Mediterranean Sea.

And David reigned over all Israel; and David executed judgment and justice unto all his people [[2Sam. 8:15](#)].

David was noted for his judgment and justice to his people. There has been a tremendous expansion and extension of the kingdom. David has brought the kingdom to its zenith and made it a world power corresponding to other kingdoms of that day.

Chapter 9

David Befriends Mephibosheth (9:1-13)

This chapter records one of the most beautiful stories in the Scriptures. It is a story that reveals what a great man David really was. We usually think of David in connection with the sin he committed, and that is probably a natural thing to do. Suppose I had a large white screen before me. On that screen is one little black spot -- some ink got on the screen. As I look at it, what is the most impressive thing about it? There is a vast area of white, but that one little black spot stands out. Or suppose you ride down the highway, as I have done in west Texas, and you see a couple of thousand sheep in a field. All of the sheep are white but one. Which sheep do you really see? So it is in the life of David. We always concentrate on his big sin, and it was big. The trouble is that we give sparse attention to the noble life and exploits of David. Someone has said, "There is so much good in the worst of us, and so much bad in the best of us, that it behooves most of us not to talk about the rest of us." Maybe we ought to reevaluate our viewpoint of David. There are so many bright spots in the long life of David, from that young shepherd boy who

slew a giant, to an old man wise in experience who could write, "The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want." In this chapter we shall see the gracious side of David's character.

Chapter 9 records the story of Mephibosheth. He is the son of Jonathan and the grandson of Saul. It is important at this point to recall some of the background of Saul. He had been the pitiless foe and bitter enemy of David. At the death of Saul, David began to marshal his forces. According to oriental custom of that day, a new king would naturally put to death all contenders to the throne of a former dynasty. Any claimant would be removed by execution. That would protect the new king from any threat. According to the code of that day, David would have been justified in putting to death any of the offspring of Saul. When Saul and Jonathan had been killed in the same battle, a little son of Jonathan's was hidden lest David find him and kill him. The name of this boy was Mephibosheth. David could more firmly establish his throne by slaying this boy and thus remove the last vestige of danger.

And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake?

And there was of the house of Saul a servant whose name was Ziba. And when they had called him unto David, the king said to him, Art thou Ziba? And he said, Thy servant is he.

And the king said, Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may shew the kindness of God unto him? And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son, which is lame on his feet.

And the king said unto him, Where is he? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he is in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lo-debar [[2Sam. 9:1-4](#)].

Ziba, a servant of Saul, betrayed the hiding place of Mephibosheth, and David could have easily killed him.

Then king David sent, and fetched him out of the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, from Lo-debar.

Now when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, he fell on his face, and did reverence. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant! [[2Sam. 9:5-6](#)].

When Mephibosheth is brought before David, he falls on his face before him, expecting to be executed. Instead, David speaks kindly to him, calling him by his name.

And David said unto him, Fear not: for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually [[2Sam. 9:7](#)].

David quickly puts him at ease and explains the reason he has sent for him. He restores his inheritance to him and gives him a permanent place at the king's table -- honoring him as one of his own sons!

And he bowed himself, and said, What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am? [[2Sam. 9:8](#)].

Notice the reaction of Mephibosheth to all of this. Had there been another king on the throne, he would have been slain. It would have been an entirely different story. Realizing this, Mephibosheth counts himself as "a dead dog." But David does not call him that. He says, "You are no dead dog. You are Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan. I intend to show kindness to you."

Then the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, I have given unto thy master's son all that pertained to Saul and to all his house.

Thou therefore, and thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him, and thou shalt bring in the fruits, that thy master's son may have food to eat: but Mephibosheth thy master's son shall eat bread alway at my table. Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants [[2Sam. 9:9-10](#)].

That is quite a household! So this property and land of Saul's was turned over to Mephibosheth. It rightfully belonged to him, and David sees to it that he gets it.

Then said Ziba unto the king, According to all that my lord the king hath commanded his servant, so shall thy servant do. As for Mephibosheth, said the king, he shall eat at my table, as one of the king's sons.

And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name was Micha. And all that dwelt in the house of Ziba were servants unto Mephibosheth.

So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem: for he did eat continually at the king's table; and was lame on both his feet [[2Sam. 9:11-13](#)].

What David did for Mephibosheth was wonderful, but there are some other impressive lessons with great spiritual truths which I don't want you to miss.

1. A child of God recognizes that he is also a cripple in God's sight. We are told in [Romans 3:15-16](#): "Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways." That is the report from God's clinic on the human race. Our feet lead us astray. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" ([Isa. 53:6](#)). Then the writer of the Book of Proverbs says, "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" ([Prov. 16:25](#)). Our feet get us into trouble. The way that the soul and the feet are so closely connected in Scripture is quite interesting. I do not mean to make a bad pun; I am not talking about the sole of the foot.

Remembering that David for the rest of his life had a crippled boy who ate at his table, listen to the words of [Psalm 56:13](#), "For thou hast delivered my soul from death: wilt not thou deliver my feet from failing, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?" Then in [Psalm 73:2](#) David says, "But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped." David knew what it was to have lame feet! In [Psalm 116:8](#) he says,

"For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling." My friend, all of us are actually cripples before God.

Modern philosophy and humanism present another picture of man. I once heard a liberal say that Christ came to reveal the splendors of the human soul! God says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" ([Jer. 17:9](#)). Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, and it is a mess of bad things. You cannot expect any good from human nature. Paul could say, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not" ([Rom. 7:18](#)). Paul had no confidence in the flesh. The Law is condemnation. [John 14:6](#) says, "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." When we come that way, He will receive us.

2. David extended kindness to Mephibosheth for the sake of Jonathan. This is another facet of this amazing incident. You see, David did not know the boy. He did what he did for the sake of Jonathan whom he loved. When David looked upon this boy, he did not see a cripple; he saw Jonathan. He had made a covenant with Jonathan. The kindness, mercy, and grace extended to a helpless person were for the sake of another.

We have seen how much Jonathan meant to David. When the news of his death reached him, he said: "How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women" ([2Sam. 1:25-26](#)). Now God has saved you and me because of Another -- the Lord Jesus Christ. When we accept Jesus Christ as Savior, [Ephesians 1:6](#) tells us that we are "accepted in the beloved." When God sees you and me in Christ, He accepts us and saves us.

3. David said nothing about the lame feet of Mephibosheth. There is no record that David ever mentioned it or made an allusion to it. He never said to him, "It is too bad that you are crippled." He treated him like a prince. He sat at the king's table, and his feet were covered with a linen cloth. My friend, God forgets our sin because it is blotted out by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the only way God can forgive our sins. The writer of Hebrews put it this way: "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" ([Heb. 10:17](#)).

4. Mephibosheth said nothing about his lame feet. What do you think David and Mephibosheth talked about when they sat at the table? They talked about another person. Do you know who it was? It was Jonathan. David loved Jonathan. Mephibosheth loved Jonathan -- he was his father. Jonathan was the subject of conversation.

What should you and I talk about? Some Christians take a keen delight in talking about the old days when they lived in sin. It is too bad that when we get together we don't talk about Another. The Lord Jesus Christ should be the main subject of our conversation.

5. Others said nothing about Mephibosheth's lame feet. There was a large company that ate at the king's table. One day they saw David bringing this crippled boy to the table. The gossips did not say, "Did you hear how it happened?" Instead they listened to the king. They heard David praise Mephibosheth. They had no time to indulge in cheap talk.

Their hearts went out in love to this boy. You see, love "beareth all things, endureth all things." Love "never fails" ([1Cor. 13:7-8](#)).

As far as I can tell, David was never able to make this boy walk. If you see that you cannot walk well-pleasing to God, turn to the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ said to the man with palsy, whose friends had let him down through the roof, ". . . Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. . . . Arise, and walk" ([Matt. 9:2-5](#)). The apostle Paul urged: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love" ([Eph. 4:1-2](#)). If you are failing in your walk, turn to Christ for help.

Christ is sending out an invitation today into the highways and byways and out into the streets of your town. He is saying, "Come to my table of salvation just as you are, crippled, and I will feed you." He says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" ([Matt. 11:28](#)). He also says, ". . . If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" ([John 7:37](#)).

What a wonderful picture of God's love is presented in this chapter!

Chapter 10

David Wars Against Ammon And Syria (10:1-19)

And it came to pass after this, that the king of the children of Ammon died, and Hanun his son reigned in his stead.

Then said David, I will shew kindness unto Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father shewed kindness unto me. And David sent to comfort him by the hand of his servants for his father. And David's servants came into the land of the children of Ammon.

And the princes of the children of Ammon said unto Hanun their lord, Thinkest thou that David doth honour thy father, that he hath sent comforters unto thee? hath not David rather sent his servants unto thee, to search the city, and to spy it out, and to overthrow it? [[2Sam. 10:1-3](#)].

You can see that these people had no confidence at all in David. They believed that he intended to attack them. His friendly gesture was completely misunderstood.

Wherefore Hanun took David's servants, and shaved off the one half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle, even to their buttocks, and sent them away [[2Sam. 10:4](#)].

My friend, that was an insult! I can't think of a way to more thoroughly humiliate David's ambassadors than this. Some commentators believe that this was Hanun's challenge to war -- whereas David had meant it as a gesture of goodwill and peace.

When they told it unto David, he sent to meet them, because the men were greatly ashamed: and the king said, Tarry at Jericho until your beards be grown, and then return.

And when the children of Ammon saw that they stank before David, the children of Ammon sent and hired the Syrians of Beth-

rehab, and the Syrians of Zoba, twenty thousand footmen, and of king Maacah a thousand men, and of Ish-tob twelve thousand men [2Sam. 10:5-6].

The Ammonites see that they have made themselves odious to David and prepare for war. They hire mercenaries from Syria -- at considerable cost, we learn from the account in [1Chronicles 19:6-7](#).

And when David heard of it, he sent Joab, and all the host of the mighty men.

And the children of Ammon came out, and put the battle in array at the entering in of the gate: and the Syrians of Zoba, and of Rehab, and Ish-tob, and Maacah, were by themselves in the field.

When Joab saw that the front of the battle was against him before and behind, he chose of all the choice men of Israel, and put them in array against the Syrians:

And the rest of the people he delivered into the hand of Abishai his brother, that he might put them in array against the children of Ammon [2Sam. 10:7-10].

The Israelites were now veterans in warfare. Joab, apparently, is throwing his best forces between the approaching Syrian mercenaries and the forces of the Ammonites to prevent their joining together.

And the Syrians fled before Israel; and David slew the men of seven hundred chariots of the Syrians, and forty thousand horsemen, and smote Shobach the captain of their host, who died there.

And when all the kings that were servants to Hadarezer saw that they were smitten before Israel, they made peace with Israel, and served them. So the Syrians feared to help the children of Ammon any more [2Sam. 10:18-19].

It was a tremendous victory for Israel. This establishes David, without doubt, as the great ruler of that day.

Chapter 11

THEME: David's two great sins

We have now come to the second and last section of the Book of 2 Samuel, which I have labeled "The Troubles of David." We have seen the "Triumphs of David" in the first section. Under the blessing of God, David has become one of the great kings of the earth. However, the sin recorded in this chapter places David under the judgment of God. From here on David will have trouble. His life will be a series of heartbreaks.

This sin causes the enemies of God to blaspheme -- until this day. Leering and suggestive, they exclaim, "This is the `man after God's own heart'!"

The sin of David stands out like a tar-baby in a field of snow, like a blackberry in a bowl of cream. It may cause us to miss the greatness of the man. Remember that sin was the exception in David's life -- not the pattern of it.

The Word of God does not play down the sin of David; it does not whitewash the man. God doesn't say it is not sin. God is going to call it sin, and David will be punished for it.

And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem [2Sam. 11:1].

It was the time of the year when kings went forth to war. In other words, in that day the nations had an "open season" on each other like we do today on birds and animals. At a certain season you can shoot them; at other seasons you cannot. But, after all, isn't that true even in modern warfare today? During the monsoons in Vietnam, the war came to a standstill because they got bogged down in the swamps, and the rain kept the planes out of the air. After the monsoons let up, the war was on again. The approach to war in David's day may have been a great deal more modern than we think. The unfortunate thing about the two world wars is that the greatest suffering was caused by the winter weather rather than by the enemy, but they attempted to carry on the fighting. At least in David's day there was a season for warfare. Maybe they were a little more civilized than we are. At least they recognized a time when they could enjoy comparative peace.

Now David sent Joab and the army to fight the children of Ammon. David did not go with them. Instead he tarried at Jerusalem. That was unlike David. Why did he stay? I have only a suggestion to make. After David built his palace he found it very comfortable. It was quite different from the cave of Adullam where he had spent his youth. His palace was a place of luxury and comfort. Also David loved Mount Zion and wanted to stay around that place. Prosperity is one of the things that has trapped so many men and women. Our great comfort has become a curse in our nation. David tarried in Jerusalem. That was his first mistake. He should have gone to war with his men.

And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon [2Sam. 11:2].

In that day the roof was the place where people spent their evenings. They had no front porches or patios in the rear of their homes. Even today the old city of righteousness is very compact, and the flat roof is the place where the family gathers. David went up to the roof of his palace and walked back and forth, apparently a little nervous. I suppose he had a great many problems on his mind. His men were in the field fighting and it may be that his conscience was bothering him. As he walked, he looked around and saw this woman bathing on the roof of her home. Although it was David's sin -- God put the blame right on David -- it seems that Bathsheba was a contributing factor. She could have been a little bit more modest.

At the risk of sounding like a prude, let me say we are living in a day when women's dress has become a great temptation to men. I wonder how many women, even Christian women, realize what they are doing when they wear certain types of apparel. I have attended services in many churches in which the soloist would get up and carry you to the gates of heaven. Then I have seen her sit down and carry you to the gates of hell. It is my opinion that this woman Bathsheba was partially guilty. What was she doing bathing in public? When I say "public," certainly David was able to see her from his palace. I wonder if she thought there was a chance that David might see her, and she was purposely bathing on the roof.

And David sent and inquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this Bath-sheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? [\[2Sam. 11:3\]](#).

Uriah was actually a foreigner.

And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house [\[2Sam. 11:4\]](#).

This is the ugly story, and it is put in plain and simple language so that we cannot miss the point. If David had been out in the field with his men, this would never have happened. If Bathsheba had taken her bath inside her house, this would not have happened.

And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, I am with child [\[2Sam. 11:5\]](#).

David has a real problem. What is he going to do? Uriah, Bathsheba's husband, is one of David's mighty men. He is one of David's loyal followers.

And David sent to Joab, saying, Send me Uriah the Hittite. And Joab sent Uriah to David.

And when Uriah was come unto him, David demanded of him how Joab did, and how the people did, and how the war prospered [\[2Sam. 11:6-7\]](#).

David pretended that he had brought Uriah back from the war for consultation to find out how the war was going.

And David said to Uriah, Go down to thy house, and wash thy feet. And Uriah departed out of the king's house, and there followed him a mess of meat from the king [\[2Sam. 11:8\]](#).

David is doing everything he can, in this particular instance, to try to absolve himself of any guilt.

But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and went not down to his house [\[2Sam. 11:9\]](#).

Uriah slept at the door of the king's house. At a time of war this man would not go to his own home. This really surprised David. Also it was a rebuke to David who was enjoying the luxury of his palace.

And when they had told David, saying, Uriah went not down unto his house, David said unto Uriah, Camest thou not from the journey? why then didst thou not go down unto thine house?
[2Sam. 11:10].

You can see that David is trying to get Uriah in the position where David will not be blamed for the pregnancy.

And Uriah said unto David, The ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in tents; and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open fields; shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? as thou livest, and as thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing [2Sam. 11:11].

Uriah was a great man. Although he was a foreigner, he was loyal to Israel. That made David's double sin all the greater. Uriah said, "The army and my commander are out in the field. They are in danger. I am not about to come back home and enjoy luxury and comfort."

And David said to Uriah, Tarry here to-day also, and to-morrow I will let thee depart. So Uriah abode in Jerusalem that day, and the morrow.

And when David had called him, he did eat and drink before him; and he made him drunk: and at even he went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord, but went not down to his house
[2Sam. 11:12-13].

Now David tries something else to trick Uriah into going home. David gets Uriah drunk! Yet the man still did not go home.

And it came to pass in the morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah.

And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die [2Sam. 11:14-15].

In my judgment this is the worst part of David's sin. He deliberately plotted the murder of Uriah. This is inexcusable. The Word of God records what David did. God did not cover it up; He brought it right out in the open. These are the facts. David is guilty.

And it came to pass, when Joab observed the city, that he assigned Uriah unto a place where he knew that valiant men were.

And the men of the city went out, and fought with Joab: and there fell some of the people of the servants of David; and Uriah the Hittite died also [2Sam. 11:16-17].

This chills your blood, does it not?

Then Joab sent and told David all the things concerning the war;
And charged the messenger, saying, When thou hast made an end
of telling the matters of the war unto the king,
And if so be that the king's wrath arise, and he say unto thee,
Wherefore approached ye so nigh unto the city when ye did fight?
knew ye not that they would shoot from the wall? [\[2Sam. 11:18-20\]](#).

Joab's anticipation of David's reaction may be a cover-up to hide from the messenger the true significance of the message.

Who smote Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? did not a woman cast a piece of a millstone upon him from the wall, that he died in Thebez? why went ye nigh the wall? then say thou, Thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.

So the messenger went, and came and shewed David all that Joab had sent him for.

And the messenger said unto David, Surely the men prevailed against us, and came out unto us into the field, and we were upon them even unto the entering of the gate.

And the shooters shot from off the wall upon thy servants; and some of the king's servants be dead, and thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.

Then David said unto the messenger, Thus shalt thou say unto Joab, Let not this thing displease thee, for the sword devoureth one as well as another: make thy battle more strong against the city, and overthrow it: and encourage thou him [\[2Sam. 11:21-25\]](#).

This is very pious talk from David. Aren't you ashamed of him? He is a real sinner, friend. He has done an awful thing. What should be done to him? We shall see that God is going to punish him.

And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband.

And when the mourning was past, David sent and fetched her to his house, and she became his wife, and bare him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD [\[2Sam. 11:26-27\]](#).

"The thing that David had done displeased the LORD" -- don't miss that. David did not get by with his sin. Up to this point in his life David has had many triumphs, but from now on, to his dying day, he will have trouble.

May I say to you, Christian friend, that you can sin. Someone asked me, "Can a Christian get drunk?" I replied, "Yes, a Christian can get drunk." This person was shocked, but then he asked, "Can he get by with it?" That is where the rub comes. The man of the world can get by with it; the Lord does not whip the Devil's children. But He sure takes His own children to the woodshed. Will you take it from one who has been to the woodshed? I happen to know that you cannot get by with sin. David did not get by with it. The thing

he did displeased the Lord. When a thing displeases the Lord, friend, He is going to do something about it.

David thinks he has gotten by with his sin, although there are a few people who know the facts. Joab, David's captain, knows the facts. A few of David's intimate counselors in Jerusalem who brought Bathsheba to the palace know the facts. Beyond that, no one knows, and the lips of these men are closed. They would not dare talk. David, however, wonders as he sits on his throne and looks around him. When David held court, there were probably two hundred people around him, and he undoubtedly looked into each face and silently asked himself, Do they know? After a time David probably sat back in satisfaction and said to himself, Well, I got by with it. Nobody knows.

My friend, whether it was known in Jerusalem or not, David's secret sin and our secret sins are open before God. Someone has put it this way, "Secret sin on earth is open scandal in heaven." God knows all about what we do.

Chapter 12

THEME: Nathan faces David with his sins; David repents

Nathan Faces David With His Sins (12:1-12)

The critics who say that God allows David to get by with his great sin apparently haven't read the whole story. Friend, we need to keep on reading. When Nathan confronts David with his sin, David repents. In spite of that, Nathan pronounces God's judgment upon David. David must learn that a man reaps what he sows.

God's man may get in sin, but he will not stay in sin. That is what distinguishes God's man from the man of the world. A sheep may fall in the mud, but he will struggle out of it as soon as he can. A pig will stay in the mud and enjoy it.

God has said that men, like pieces of pottery, can be marred. One flaw can ruin a valuable piece of pottery. A valuable article is put on sale because the merchant sees a flaw in it. I am a great one for sales as I go about the country. When I see that a sale is on, I rush down to the store. Usually I find that first-grade merchandise has become second-grade merchandise because of a flaw. It is marked down because of a little defect. Now David will have to be marked down because of his sin. In chapter 11 we saw David's sin in all of its blackness and ugliness. The Word of God does not soft-pedal it. The Word of God does not whitewash David's actions. His sin is as black as ink, and as dark as night, and as low as the underside of Satan and the bottomless pit, and as deep as hell. David sinned.

What David did displeased the Lord, and God is going to do something about it. You see, God did something about man's sin. He gave Jesus Christ to die on the Cross and pay the penalty -- sin is that heinous. It is God who says that sin is so black that it required the death of His Son. If you turn your back on God, you are lost. However, if you are God's man and you drop into sin, God is going to deal with you.

In chapter 11 we left David sitting on his throne in smug complacency. He thought he had gotten away with his sin, but he was wrong. David is going to live to regret that he ever committed that awful sin.

The first verse introduces us to Nathan, one of the bravest men in Scripture. David could have merely lifted his scepter and without a word could have condemned Nathan to execution for his audacity. This, however, did not stop Nathan.

And the LORD sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor [[2Sam. 12:1](#)].

Nathan is going to tell David a story. It is a story that will reveal David as though he were looking in a mirror. The Word of God is a mirror that reveals us as we really are. Nathan is going to hold up a mirror so that David can get a good look at himself. There was probably a lull in state business when Nathan came. Since Nathan was God's prophet, David said to him, "Do you have anything from the Lord for me?" He did. He told Nathan a story about two men in one city. One man was rich and the other man was poor -- a typical city with its ghetto and its rich estates.

The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds:

But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter [[2Sam. 12:2-3](#)].

The story of the rich man and the poor man sounds very familiar. The rich had many flocks and herds. The poor man had one little lamb. It was a pet and dearly loved by the family. They fed it -- it was probably a fat little fellow. It was all the poor man had. What a contrast. This has been the continual war between the rich and the poor. I personally think the outstanding problem today is not the racial problem, but the conflict between capital and labor, the rich and the poor.

And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him [[2Sam. 12:4](#)].

Nathan is telling a story that is quite familiar, is it not? The poor man had nothing but the little ewe lamb; the rich man had everything -- yet he was a skinflint. I do not often discuss politics, but I would like to put down a principle in this world of sin today. I recognize that political parties say they have the solutions for the problems of the world because they want their candidates to be elected to office. I have no confidence in men. I do not believe that any politician today is going to champion the poor. This never has been done, and it never will be done. Let us not kid ourselves about that. It is quite interesting about the government poverty programs. Do they tax the rich? No! Taxes go up for the rest of us. I tell you, they are surely taking my little ewe lamb, friends.

And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die [[2Sam. 12:5](#)].

David thought Nathan had brought before him a case for someone in the kingdom and was asking for David to rule upon it. David had a sense of right and wrong. He also had a sense of justice. He is redheaded and hotheaded. When he heard Nathan's story, he probably sprang to his feet and demanded, "Where is this man? We will arrest him. We will execute him!"

It is interesting how easily you can see the sin in somebody else, but you cannot see it in your own life. That was David's problem.

And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity [2Sam. 12:6].

David sounds like a preacher, doesn't he? It is so easy to preach to the other person, tell him his faults, analyze him, and tell him what to do. Most of us are amateur psychologists who put other people on our own little critical couches and give them a working over. That is David. David says, "Wherever that man is, we are going to see that justice is done."

And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul;

And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things [2Sam. 12:7-8].

It took courage for Nathan to say this to David. In my judgment he is the bravest man in the Bible. I know of no one who can be compared to him. He said, "David, you are the guilty one." What is David going to do? He is going to do something unusual, I can assure you of that. Dr. Margoliouth has said this: "When has this been done -- before or since? Mary, Queen of Scots, would declare that she was above the law; Charles I would have thrown over Bathsheba; James II would have hired witnesses to swear away her character; Mohammed would have produced a revelation authorizing both crimes; Charles II would have publicly abrogated the seventh commandment; Queen Elizabeth would have suspended Nathan." Years ago, the Duke of Windsor would have given up his throne for her. We have had some presidents who would have repealed the Ten Commandments and appointed Nathan to the Supreme Court. David did not do any of these things. His actions will reveal his greatness.

God would have given David anything his heart wanted, but David longed for something that was not his. The new morality today says it was not sin. God still says this is sin, and the man after God's own heart cannot get by with it.

Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon [2Sam. 12:9].

Nathan spells out the sins in no uncertain terms.

Don't you imagine, friends, that the court was shocked when they heard what Nathan said to David? There were undoubtedly many present who did not know what had happened. They hear Nathan accuse David of the most brutal crime written in the books. David has done the things that God said, "Thou shalt not do."

Is he going to get by with it?

Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife [[2Sam. 12:10](#)].

May I say, Christian friend, that when the question arises, "Can a Christian sin?" the answer is yes. But when you sin, you despise God. God says that that is what you do. When David took Uriah's wife to be his wife, he was despising God.

Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun [[2Sam. 12:11](#)].

Evil is going to arise against David out of his own house. And friends, in the next chapter a scandal breaks out among David's children that is an awful thing. It becomes a heartbreak to this man. But you will never find him whimpering or crying out to God about it, because David knew that God was putting the lash on his back. All that David wanted was what is written in [Psalm 42:1](#), "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God."

For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun [[2Sam. 12:12](#)].

David Repents (12:13-23)

And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die [[2Sam. 12:13](#)].

David should have died for this crime. God spared David's life and put away his sin, but David's baby died. God is not going to let David get by with his sin.

Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die [[2Sam. 12:14](#)].

And friends, the enemies of the Lord still blaspheme God because of what David did. When I was a pastor in downtown Los Angeles, there were many times when some unbeliever or skeptic came to me and said, "How could God choose a man like David?" They would actually leer at me while waiting for my reply. The enemy is still blaspheming. God is going to take David to the woodshed.

And Nathan departed unto his house. And the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick.

David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth.

And the elders of his house arose, and went to him, to raise him up from the earth: but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them [[2Sam. 12:15-17](#)].

David went before God and pleaded for Him to spare the little fellow's life. Finally they brought word to David that the child was dead.

But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead: therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead.

Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the LORD, and worshipped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat [[2Sam. 12:19-20](#)].

David's servants are astounded. When the child was alive, David was in sackcloth and ashes. When the child died, he should have been beside himself with grief. Instead, he got up, took a shower, and changed his clothes, then went to the house of God to worship. His servants ask for an explanation.

And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether GOD will be gracious to me, that the child may live?

But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me [[2Sam. 12:22-23](#)].

David knew that the little baby was saved. He said, "I will go to him someday." David knew that when death came to him, he would be reunited with his son.

A child dying in infancy goes to be with the Lord. [Matthew 18:10](#) says, "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." The word angels in this verse should be translated "spirits." When a little baby dies today, that baby goes immediately to be with the Lord. That is the teaching of the Word of God. I don't know about you, but this means a great deal to me because I have a little one up there, and I am looking forward to one day being with her.

David could rejoice when his infant son died because he knew that one day he would see him again. That was not the case when his son Absalom died many years later. Absalom was a heartbreak to David. When he died, David wept and mourned. Why? David was not sure Absalom was saved.

The Birth Of Solomon (12:24-25)

And David comforted Bath-sheba his wife, and went in unto her, and lay with her: and she bare a son, and he called his name Solomon: and the LORD loved him.

And he sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet; and he called his name Jедidiah, because of the LORD [[2Sam. 12:24-25](#)].

The name Jедidiah means "beloved of the Lord." This name was given by God through Nathan to Solomon.

David And Joab Take Rabbah (12:26-29)

And Joab fought against Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and took the royal city.

And Joab sent messengers to David, and said, I have fought against Rabbah, and have taken the city of waters.

Now therefore gather the rest of the people together, and encamp against the city, and take it: lest I take the city, and it be called after my name.

And David gathered all the people together, and went to Rabbah, and fought against it, and took it [[2Sam. 12:26-29](#)].

David is now back out in the field where he should have been all along. David's kingdom continues to be extended and expanded, and David becomes a great ruler of that day.

What about his sin? Did he get by with it? In the next chapter we will find out that David had a son that committed an awful crime. He raped his half sister, a daughter of David. Absalom, a full brother of the girl who was raped, killed him. Say, that was a scandal! Can you imagine how that news spread over Israel? The people said, "Look at the king ruling over us. He cannot even rule his own household!" Poor David.

Before we get through with the life of David, I feel like saying to the Lord, "You have whipped him enough. Why don't you take the lash off his back now?" But, you know, David never said that. David went into the presence of the Lord and cried: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit" ([Ps. 51:1-2](#), [12](#)). David wanted to be brought back into fellowship with his God.

CHAPTERS 13 AND 14

Chapter 13

THEME: Crimes of David's sons -- Amnon and Absalom

There is that old bromide which says, "If you are going to dance, you are going to have to pay the fiddler." If you are going to indulge in sin, you will have to suffer the consequences. The Lord gives it to us straight in [Galatians 6:7](#): "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." You are not going to get by with sin. [Galatians 6:8](#) goes on to say, "For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." There is no question that David had sown to the flesh. Don't think for one

minute that now he can walk away from his sin, make a sweet little confession, and that is it. I have heard people say, "Well, the blood of Christ covers it." It certainly does, and you don't lose your salvation, brother. But I want to tell you that sin causes a festering sore that has to be lanced.

This brings us to chapter 13. David has made his confession of sin. God has told him, "Your sin has caused My enemies to blaspheme Me. I won't give you up, but you are not going to get by with it." Thank God that He will not give us up, but the chickens do come home to roost.

David's Daughter Raped By His Son (13:1-22)

And it came to pass after this, that Absalom the son of David had a fair sister, whose name was Tamar; and Amnon the son of David loved her [[2Sam. 13:1](#)].

Although Absalom and Tamar had the same mother and father, Tamar was Amnon's half sister. David was their father, but they had different mothers.

And Amnon was so vexed, that he fell sick for his sister Tamar; for she was a virgin; and Amnon thought it hard for him to do any thing to her.

But Amnon had a friend, whose name was Jonadab, the son of Shimeah David's brother: and Jonadab was a very subtil man.

And he said unto him, Why art thou, being the king's son, lean from day to day? wilt thou not tell me? And Amnon said unto him, I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister [[2Sam. 13:2-4](#)].

Amnon was not eating. He was so madly in love with Tamar that he had lost his appetite. His friend could see that he was not eating, but he also recognized the problem since Tamar was Absalom's sister and Amnon was afraid of Absalom.

And Jonadab said unto him, Lay thee down on thy bed, and make thyself sick: and when thy father cometh to see thee, say unto him, I pray thee, let my sister Tamar come, and give me meat, and dress the meat in my sight, that I may see it, and eat it at her hand.

So Amnon lay down, and made himself sick: and when the king was come to see him, Amnon said unto the king, I pray thee, let Tamar my sister come, and make me a couple of cakes in my sight, that I may eat at her hand.

Then David sent home to Tamar, saying, Go now to thy brother Amnon's house, and dress him meat [[2Sam. 13:5-7](#)].

There is no use to read the next few verses which contain the sordid details of what happened next. Amnon raped Tamar. Then we are told that he hated her.

Then Amnon hated her exceedingly; so that the hatred wherewith he hated her was greater than the love wherewith he had loved her. And Amnon said unto her, Arise, be gone [[2Sam. 13:15](#)].

This awful thing had taken place in the house of David. When Amnon was through with her, he flung her out.

And Tamar put ashes on her head, and rent her garment of divers colours that was on her, and laid her hand on her head, and went on crying [2Sam. 13:19].

Tamar was thrown out of the house, and now she is in sackcloth and ashes.

And Absalom her brother said unto her, hath Amnon thy brother been with thee? but hold now thy peace, my sister: he is thy brother; regard not this thing. So Tamar remained desolate in her brother Absalom's house.

But when king David heard of all these things, he was very wroth [2Sam. 13:20-21].

David is angry about what happened but does nothing about it. David was like many other men in Scripture: he was an indulgent father who raised a bunch of kids who were bad. That has happened again and again. It started with old Eli, God's high priest. His sons were not only immoral, they were godless and had a religious racket going. Then we come to Samuel. Since he was raised in the same atmosphere as Eli's sons, you would think Samuel would be more of a disciplinarian and that he would have maintained some authority and control over his sons. But his sons turned out to be corrupt and dishonest. Next we come to David. He knew Samuel, and he knew Samuel's sons. You would think he would have been more strict with his children, but he was not. He too was an indulgent father. He was angry about what Amnon did to his sister Tamar. But, after all, what kind of an example has David set for his boys? The chickens are beginning to come home to roost.

Perhaps you think I am a square because I say some old-fashioned things, but I am convinced that the main problem today in Christian homes is the lack of example and discipline on the part of the parents. My friend, if you are a Christian and you have a naughty little boy in your home, don't spend your time lecturing him. You are not going to get anywhere that way. Give him an example and discipline -- and start soon, because the day will come when he will walk out.

Another strike against David is the fact that he had multiple wives and many children. As a king with many heavy responsibilities, how much time do you think he spent in rearing his children? The problem with many of us who have been in Christian work is that we probably have neglected our families for the sake of the work. We have excused our neglect on the basis that we were doing Christian work. I must confess that if I could go back and do one thing over again, it would be to spend more time with my daughter when she was growing up. Do you know why? I was too busy when she was small. Now I am not so busy and I can spend time with my grandchildren.

Christian parents need to realize that they need to spend time training their children. Don't get the impression that you are raising a little angel. There are many parents who treat a child as if he were a cross between an orchid and a piece of Dresden china. They believe that if they apply the board of education to the seat of knowledge they will break

him in pieces or he will come apart. [Proverbs 23:13](#) says, "Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die."

David did nothing about the problem created by Amnon. So what happened?

And Absalom spake unto his brother Amnon neither good nor bad: for Absalom hated Amnon, because he had forced his sister Tamar [[2Sam. 13:22](#)].

This is David's home, friends. This is David's life at home. He did not get by with sin. God says that we will not get by with sin either. Absalom is marking time. He is waiting for the day when he can get even with Amnon. And that day will come.

Amnon Is Murdered By Absalom (13:28-39)

I am not going into detail at this point, but the day came when Absalom killed Amnon. Absalom waited for two years before making his move. He invited the king's sons to a feast in connection with sheep-shearing time. Since Absalom had shown no signs of wanting revenge, David let Amnon go and attend the party.

Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, Mark ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say unto you, Smite, Amnon; then kill him, fear not: have not I commanded you? be courageous, and be valiant [[2Sam. 13:28](#)].

When the day came that Amnon's "heart was merry with wine," Absalom had him killed.

The first message David received was that all his sons were dead. Then Jonadab told him that only Amnon was slain.

Now therefore let not my lord the king take the thing to his heart, to think that all the king's sons are dead: for Amnon only is dead.

But Absalom fled. And the young man that kept the watch lifted up his eyes, and, behold, there came much people by the way of the hill side behind him.

And Jonadab said unto the king, Behold, the king's sons come: as thy servant said, so it is [[2Sam. 13:33-35](#)].

Since Absalom actually plotted Amnon's murder, he has to flee.

And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of speaking, that, behold, the king's sons came, and lifted up their voice and wept: and the king also and all his servants wept very sore.

But Absalom fled, and went to Talmai, the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur. And David mourned for his son every day [[2Sam. 13:36-37](#)].

Absalom's mother was a daughter of the king of Geshur, and this is one reason why Absalom fled to him. As I have pointed out before, David made a mistake in marrying this foreign woman. Remember that he had married this woman during his lapse of faith when he withdrew from the land. She bore the king two very attractive children. One was Absalom and the other was Tamar. Apparently David did not discipline this wild boy,

who was the son of a pagan and a Bedouin. In a way, Absalom seems to be justified in what he did, since David did not take matters into his own hands when Amnon sinned.

So Absalom fled, and went to Geshur, and was there three years.

And the soul of king David longed to go forth unto Absalom: for he was comforted concerning Amnon, seeing he was dead [[2Sam. 13:38-39](#)].

After Absalom took Amnon's life, he fled. David wanted to bring him back, but he did not. David mourned for him and that is all he did. He mourned for him and wished for his return. Absalom, I believe, was more like David than any of his other sons. I think it was David's intention that Absalom succeed him as the next king of Israel. That ambition also lurked in the mind of Absalom, as we shall see.

Chapter 14

David Permits Absalom To Return (14:1-33)

Now Joab the son of Zeruiah perceived that the king's heart was toward Absalom.

And Joab sent to Tekoah, and fetched thence a wise woman, and said unto her, I pray thee, feign thyself to be a mourner, and put on now mourning apparel, and anoint not thyself with oil, but be as a woman that had a long time mourned for the dead:

And come to the king, and speak on this manner unto him. So Joab put the words in her mouth [[2Sam. 14:1-3](#)].

Joab grew up in the vicinity of Tekoah and may have known this woman from earlier days.

And when the woman of Tekoah spake to the king, she fell on her face to the ground, and did obeisance, and said, Help, O king.

And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, I am indeed a widow woman, and mine husband is dead.

And thy handmaid had two sons, and they two strove together in the field, and there was none to part them, but the one smote the other, and slew him.

And, behold, the whole family is risen against thine handmaid, and they said, Deliver him that smote his brother, that we may kill him, for the life of his brother whom he slew; and we will destroy the heir also: and so they shall quench my coal which is left, and shall not leave to my husband neither name nor remainder upon the earth [[2Sam. 14:4-7](#)].

Joab got her to play upon the feelings of David by telling him her sad story. Just as David had used deception, he was now being deceived.

Then said she, I pray thee, let the king remember the LORD thy God, that thou wouldest not suffer the revengers of blood to destroy any more, lest they destroy my son. And he said, As the

LORD liveth, there shall not one hair of thy son fall to the earth
[2Sam. 14:11].

David grants her imaginary son a full pardon. Then she makes the application to David and Absalom.

And the woman said, Wherefore then hast thou thought such a thing against the people of God? for the king doth speak this thing as one which is faulty, in that the king doth not fetch home again his banished [2Sam. 14:13].

The widow of Tekoah was putting David in the place of her imaginary prosecutors. What her prosecutors could do to her remaining son, David was doing to God's people by punishing Absalom for the crime he had committed. She is representing the people of Israel as the widowed mother. She claims to be speaking in the name of all Israel, and possibly she does express their feelings. Absalom was very popular with the people, and they probably felt that Amnon got what he deserved.

The final outcome of the incident is that in a half-hearted way David is willing for Absalom to return.

And the king said unto Joab, Behold now, I have done this thing: go therefore, bring the young man Absalom again.

And Joab fell to the ground on his face, and bowed himself, and thanked the king: and Joab said, To-day thy servant knoweth that I have found grace in thy sight, my lord, O king, in that the king hath fulfilled the request of his servant.

So Joab arose and went to Geshur, and brought Absalom to Jerusalem.

And the king said, Let him turn to his own house, and let him not see my face. So Absalom returned to his own house, and saw not the king's face [2Sam. 14:21-24].

It is unfortunate that David did not want to see his son. It actually set the stage for Absalom's rebellion which takes place in chapter 15. Absalom was a bad boy, but he was a good politician. We shall see this in the next chapter.

Absalom's high-handed action of setting Joab's standing grain on fire to force Joab to come to him is another revelation of Absalom's personality.

And Absalom answered Joab, Behold, I sent unto thee, saying, Come hither, that I may send thee to the king, to say, Wherefore am I come from Geshur? it had been good for me to have been there still: now therefore let me see the king's face; and if there be any iniquity in me, let him kill me.

So Joab came to the king, and told him: and when he had called for Absalom, he came to the king, and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king: and the king kissed Absalom [2Sam. 14:32-33].

Absalom's prank succeeded in persuading Joab to bring him to his father for reconciliation. Although David's kiss was a sign of complete reconciliation and restoration of Absalom's position as the king's son, it was given reluctantly. The fact that his father did not give him instant, wholehearted forgiveness rankled in his soul.

God had not forgiven David half-heartedly. God did not say, "Well, I forgive you, but we will not have fellowship any more. I will not restore to you the joy of your salvation." When God forgives, He forgives completely. You and I are admonished: "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" ([Eph. 4:32](#)). Has God forgiven us? Yes! How are we to forgive others? The same way that God does. David should have forgiven Absalom. He is setting the stage for rebellion.

Oh, my friend, our God is a God who forgives. [Galatians 6:1](#) tells us, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." It appears that many of us don't read that verse correctly. We think it says, "If any man be overtaken in a fault, take a baseball bat and hit him over the head!" We are reluctant to forgive, and we can be very mean at times, very unloving, and critical. There are times when the truth should be spoken, but when forgiveness is asked for, it should be extended immediately.

David made a blunder in not forgiving his son as God had forgiven David. He will live to regret it.

CHAPTERS 15 AND 16

Chapter 15

THEME: Absalom rebels against David

Absalom Rebels Against David (15:1-12)

David, after committing his terrible sin, found that trouble came to him thick and fast. The same way that he had sinned, members of his family sinned, and David is not through with the effect of it yet. God really took David to the woodshed.

In this chapter Absalom leads a rebellion against David. In a very subtle way Absalom begins to steal the hearts of the children of Israel. He is an attractive young fellow -- probably like David in many ways. He is the heir apparent to the throne; that is, David would like for him to succeed him. We find now that Absalom is back in Jerusalem, beginning to move secretly to plot David's overthrow. This is a dastardly deed, but the chickens are coming home to roost for David. Actually, a formidable revolution will break out which will cause David to flee from Jerusalem.

And it came to pass after this, that Absalom prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him.

And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of

what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel [2Sam. 15:1-2].

Absalom stationed himself at the busiest gate of the city. When men with complaints came to the gate requiring justice, he listened to them with a great show of sympathy.

And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee.

Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice! [2Sam. 15:3-4].

Absalom was a bad boy but a good politician; he was clever and crooked, subtle and sly.

And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him.

And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel [2Sam. 15:5-6].

Absalom is a true politician, isn't he? This is the way many men get elected to office today. They have no qualifications other than the fact that they are good at handshaking and backslapping. There are many preachers who use this method today. They cannot preach, and they cannot teach, but they sure can slap backs. Unfortunately that is exactly what appeals to us. As far as I can tell from the Word of God, that is the way that the Antichrist will come to power. He is going to be the greatest little backslapper that the world has ever seen. Now Absalom was a good backslapper. He stood at the gate and said, "Oh, if I were only a judge. Then you would get justice!" You can understand the appeal that that kind of statement would make. Absalom was saying, "If you vote me into office, I can solve all of your problems. I will be able to take care of all the foreign and domestic affairs." That is what the politicians tell us today. Unfortunately, we listen to them, believe them, and vote for them. Then when they get into office, they do not produce.

Absalom, of course, is preparing for a rebellion against David, his father. This rebellion within the house of David is a terrible thing.

And it came to pass after forty years, that Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the LORD, in Hebron.

For thy servant vowed a vow while I abode at Geshur in Syria, saying, If the LORD shall bring me again indeed to Jerusalem, then I will serve the LORD [2Sam. 15:7-8].

His request seems a little unusual -- he says he wants to go south to Hebron to pay a vow he made in exile, yet he was in Syria in the north while he was in exile. However, David does not question it.

And the king said unto him, Go in peace. So he arose, and went to Hebron.

But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying,
As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say,
Absalom reigneth in Hebron [[2Sam. 15:9-10](#)].

You will recall that Hebron is where David began his reign. He was king over Judah for seven years in Hebron. Absalom, obviously, did not go to Hebron to pay a vow. He went there to begin his rebellion.

And with Absalom went two hundred men out of Jerusalem, that were called; and they went in their simplicity, and they knew not any thing [[2Sam. 15:11](#)].

In other words, these men went along with Absalom, but they did not know that the rebellion was prepared against David.

And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counsellor, from his city, even from Giloh, while he offered sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom [[2Sam. 15:12](#)].

This is a rebellion that gains momentum. It begins to snowball as it goes along, and soon there is a great company standing with Absalom. Even Ahithophel, David's counselor, is a partner to all of this. Before David actually realizes what is happening, the rebellion surfaces.

David Flees (15:13-23)

And there came a messenger to David, saying, The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom.

And David said unto all his servants that were with him at Jerusalem, Arise, and let us flee; for we shall not else escape from Absalom: make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword [[2Sam. 15:13-14](#)].

David is going to flee from Jerusalem. The question arises, "Why did he flee?" David loved the city of Jerusalem. Why didn't he make a stand in this city? I am confident that David knew God was punishing him for his sin. I know this is true on the basis of [2Samuel 15:25-26](#) where we are told, "And the king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the LORD, he will bring me again, and shew me both it, and his habitation: But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him." David knew what was happening to him. He knew that judgment was coming from God.

You recall in [2Samuel 13](#) that Amnon committed a crime against Tamar. David was disgraced by the awful thing that happened. This scandal had taken place in Jerusalem. You will also recall that David's great sin involving Uriah and Bathsheba -- when David should have been out fighting with his army -- took place in Jerusalem. David is leaving Jerusalem this time because he knows that God is punishing him, and he does not want to see the city he built and loved become the scene of battle. In [2Samuel 15:30](#) we are told, "And David went up by the ascent of mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot: and all the people that was with him covered every

man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up." David loved Jerusalem. He did not want it to be a place of battle; yet this city was to be destroyed more than any other city because of its rebellion and sin.

Also David fled from Jerusalem because he was not ready to press the issue with Absalom. We will see in the next chapters that it was in David's heart to spare the life of his son. He did not want harm to come to him. I think David loved Absalom above every person on earth. Leaving Jerusalem puts David's life in grave danger, but that is nothing new for him. He had been in great danger many times. He has more concern about his relationship with God and with his son than he has about his life.

With this background, let us look at the rebellion that is taking place.

Then said the king to Ittai the Gittite, Wherefore goest thou also with us? return to thy place, and abide with the king: for thou art a stranger, and also an exile.

Whereas thou camest but yesterday, should I this day make thee go up and down with us? seeing I go whither I may, return thou, and take back thy brethren: mercy and truth be with thee [2Sam. 15:19-20].

Ittai is a native of Gath in Philistia, probably a general in his own country since David later makes him a joint commander with Joab and Abishai. He feels such loyalty to David that he and his entire family insist upon going into exile with him.

And Ittai answered the king, and said, As the LORD liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be.

And David said to Ittai, Go and pass over. And Ittai the Gittite passed over, and all his men, and all the little ones that were with him.

And all the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people passed over: the king also himself passed over the brook Kidron, and all the people passed over, toward the way of the wilderness [2Sam. 15:21-23].

David had many loyal followers. There were many men willing to lay down their lives for him.

The Ark Is Returned To Jerusalem (15:24-31)

And Io Zadok also, and all the Levites were with him, bearing the ark of the covenant of God: and they set down the ark of God; and Abiathar went up, until all the people had done passing out of the city.

And the king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the LORD, he will bring me again, and shew me both it, and his habitation [2Sam. 15:24-25].

David sent the ark of the covenant of God back to Jerusalem where it belonged. He recognized that what was happening to him was the judgment of God. As he left the city, he went over the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went.

And one told David, saying, Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, O LORD, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness [[2Sam. 15:31](#)].

Ahithophel had been a highly esteemed counselor of David. When he defected to Absalom's side, David prayed that his counsel to Absalom would be foolish, and God answered this prayer, by the way. Notice that David didn't ask for judgment upon Absalom.

Hushai Is Sent Back (15:32-37)

And it came to pass, that when David was come to the top of the mount, where he worshipped God, behold, Hushai the Archite came to meet him with his coat rent, and earth upon his head:

Unto whom David said, If thou passest on with me, then thou shalt be a burden unto me [[2Sam. 15:32-33](#)].

He may have been elderly and would require more care.

But if thou return to the city, and say unto Absalom, I will be thy servant, O king; as I have been thy father's servant hitherto, so will I now also be thy servant: then mayest thou for me defeat the counsel of Ahithophel.

And hast thou not there with thee Zadok and Abiathar the priests? therefore it shall be, that what thing soever thou shalt hear out of the king's house, thou shalt tell it to Zadok and Abiathar the priests.

Behold, they have there with them their two sons, Ahimaaz Zadok's son, and Jonathan Abiathar's son; and by them ye shall send unto me every thing that ye can hear.

So Hushai David's friend came into the city, and Absalom came into Jerusalem [[2Sam. 15:34-37](#)].

When David heard of Ahithophel's defection to Absalom, he induced Hushai to go over to Absalom to defeat the counsels of this now dangerous enemy. Hushai was David's friend and would risk being a spy for him.

Chapter 16

Ziba, Mephibosheth's Servant, Deceives David (16:1-2)

And when David was a little past the top of the hill, behold, Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him, with a couple of asses saddled, and upon them two hundred loaves of bread, and an hundred bunches of raisins, and an hundred of summer fruits, and a bottle of wine.

And the king said unto Ziba, What meanest thou by these? And Ziba said, The asses be for the king's household to ride on; and the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat; and the wine, that such as be faint in the wilderness may drink [[2Sam. 16:1-2](#)].

You recall that Mephibosheth was Jonathan's lame son. Because of David's great love for Jonathan, he cared for Mephibosheth.

Ziba, a servant of Mephibosheth, thought that the internal struggle within the house of David would give the house of Saul a chance to regain the throne -- Mephibosheth was the sole heir to the throne. By telling his fictitious story, Ziba hoped to get something out of the estate of Mephibosheth. David, not having opportunity to check the facts, impetuously grants Ziba lands that had been Mephibosheth's.

Shimei Curses David (16:5-23)

And when king David came to Bahurim, behold, thence came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera: he came forth, and cursed still as he came.

And he cast stones at David, and at all the servants of king David: and all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left.

And thus said Shimei when he cursed, Come out, come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial:

The LORD hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned; and the LORD hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son: and, behold, thou art taken in thy mischief, because thou art a bloody man [[2Sam. 16:5-8](#)].

What Shimei said to David had some truth in it. David was a bloody man, and judgment was coming upon him -- there was no question about that.

Then said Abishai the son of Zeruiah unto the king, Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head [[2Sam. 16:9](#)].

Abishai, one of David's men, was all for silencing this man permanently.

Notice David's reaction to what Shimei said.

And the king said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah? so let him curse, because the LORD hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so?

And David said to Abishai, and to all his servants, Behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life: how much more now may this Benjamite do it? let him alone, and let him curse; for the LORD hath bidden him [[2Sam. 16:10-11](#)].

David was saying, "I don't mind this outsider cursing me. I do not want to take revenge on him. The thing that is happening to me is the judgment of God. What disturbs me is that it is my own boy, Absalom, who is leading the rebellion against me."

We have been with David as he escaped from Jerusalem; now we go back to Jerusalem with Hushai as he offers his services to Absalom.

And Absalom, and all the people the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel with him.

And it came to pass, when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, was come unto Absalom, that Hushai said unto Absalom, God save the king, God save the king.

And Absalom said to Hushai, Is this thy kindness to thy friend? why wentest thou not with thy friend? [[2Sam. 16:15-17](#)].

Absalom is surprised that this trusted friend of his father's did not go with him into exile.

And Hushai said unto Absalom, Nay; but whom the LORD, and this people, and all the men of Israel, choose, his will I be, and with him will I abide.

And again, whom should I serve? should I not serve in the presence of his son? as I have served in thy father's presence, so will I be in thy presence [[2Sam. 16:18-19](#)].

Hushai is saying that the man whom God and the people choose will be his man, although he is secretly planning to be a spy for David.

Then said Absalom to Ahithophel, Give counsel among you what we shall do.

And Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Go in unto thy father's concubines, which he hath left to keep the house; and all Israel shall hear that thou art abhorred of thy father: then shall the hands of all that are with thee be strong.

So they spread Absalom a tent upon the top of the house; and Absalom went in unto his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel [[2Sam. 16:20-22](#)].

Ahithophel advises Absalom to do an abominable thing, but it has great significance for Israel. Absalom's act was a coarse and rude declaration that David's rights had ended and that everything he owned now belonged to his son.

And the counsel of Ahithophel, which he counselled in those days, was as if a man had inquired at the oracle of God: so was all the counsel of Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom [[2Sam. 16:23](#)].

The word of Ahithophel was obeyed without question -- just as if it had been the command of God.

The act of Absalom fulfilled what the Lord had spoken to David: "Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun" ([2Sam. 12:11-12](#)).

We now find David back out in the dens and caves of the earth. What is he going to do? Absalom is going to try to win a victory over David's forces. David, however, is an old veteran and knows how to fight. Absalom is doing a very dangerous thing by going against his father. The tragic thing is that David loves him and wants to save him.

These were difficult days for David. I am sure by now that your heart goes out in sympathy to him. But David does not whimper or cry aloud. He says in substance, "Just as long as I know that things are right with God, I will bear these burdens that come upon me."

David was a great man, friend. He had committed an awful sin, but he is like a wonderful piece of statuary with one flaw in it. That is the way many Christians are today. Did you ever meet one who didn't have a flaw? We all have flaws in our lives. Thank God that He will not throw us overboard because of the flaws.

CHAPTERS 17 AND 18

Chapter 17

THEME: Civil war between Absalom and David

In chapter 17, Absalom hears the counsel of Ahithophel and Hushai, David's friend. When Absalom accepts Hushai's argument that David and his men are veterans in the field of battle and that Absalom needs reinforcements, David is able to escape and prepare for battle. In chapter 18 the two sides engage in civil war. The battle ends with Absalom's death. The chapter concludes with the touching grief of David over his slain son.

The Conflicting Counsel Of Ahithophel And Hushai (17:1-14)

As we have been following the different experiences of David, we saw first his triumphs, and now we are seeing his troubles. In fact, he is really in trouble right now. David's own son Absalom, whom I believe he loved above everything else in this world, is leading a rebellion against him. This was a heartbreak to the king. David withdrew from Jerusalem because he did not want it to become the scene of a battle and possibly be destroyed. Instead, David left his beloved city. He sent Hushai back to Absalom so that he might give him counsel that would be to David's advantage. Ahithophel, who had once been an advisor to David, had defected to Absalom. In chapter 17 these two advisors are giving Absalom contradictory counsel about whether or not to attack his father at this time.

Moreover Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Let me now choose out twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue after David this night:

And I will come upon him while he is weary and weak handed, and will make him afraid: and all the people that are with him shall flee; and I will smite the king only [[2Sam. 17:1-2](#)].

In other words, if David could be destroyed, the rebellion would be broken and Absalom would be made king. Ahithophel's advice, of course, would be disastrous for David if it were followed. Ahithophel outlines his plan:

And I will bring back all the people unto thee: the man whom thou seekest is as if all returned: so all the people shall be in peace.

And the saying pleased Absalom well, and all the elders of Israel [[2Sam. 17:3-4](#)].

Even Absalom agreed to this heartless plan.

Then said Absalom, Call now Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear likewise what he saith.

And when Hushai was come to Absalom, Absalom spake unto him, saying, Ahithophel hath spoken after this manner: shall we do after his saying? if not; speak thou [[2Sam. 17:5-6](#)].

It was a good thing that Hushai was present, because he offers an altogether different strategy. He gives Absalom advice that is very good -- but it is favorable to David. David is in a very vulnerable position and desperately needs time.

And Hushai said unto Absalom, The counsel that Ahithophel hath given is not good at this time.

For, said Hushai, thou knowest thy father and his men, that they be mighty men, and they be chafed in their minds, as a bear robbed of her whelps in the field: and thy father is a man of war, and will not lodge with the people.

Behold, he is hid now in some pit, or in some other place: and it will come to pass, when some of them be overthrown at the first, that whosoever heareth it will say, There is a slaughter among the people that follow Absalom.

And he also that is valiant, whose heart is as the heart of a lion, shall utterly melt: for all Israel knoweth that thy father is a mighty man, and they which be with him are valiant men [[2Sam. 17:7-10](#)].

Hushai is giving Absalom good advice even though it is for David's benefit. His advice is simply this: "You must recognize, Absalom, that you are not a man of war. Your father is a man of war. He is acquainted with the field. He is a veteran. He is rugged. He has his mighty men with him. David and his men are chafed by what has happened. They are licking their wounds right now and are like a mother bear who has been robbed of her whelps -- that mama bear is really going to fight and will become twice as dangerous as she would be otherwise. You would be very foolish to attack David now. But suppose you did attack him. David has been pursued before -- he is an expert at evading capture. Saul hunted him for years. David would not be among the people. He would know where

to hide. He would know how to escape. Suppose you went into his host and did not find David. Soon word would circulate that you were losing the battle, and you would find that the people who had temporarily joined you in your cause would not stay with you."

Now that Hushai has pointed out errors in judgment in Ahithophel's counsel, he outlines another strategy.

Therefore I counsel that all Israel be generally gathered unto thee, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, as the sand that is by the sea for multitude; and that thou go to battle in thine own person.

So shall we come upon him in some place where he shall be found, and we will light upon him as the dew falleth on the ground: and of him and of all the men that are with him there shall not be left so much as one [[2Sam. 17:11-12](#)].

He is saying to Absalom, "The important thing is that you are not prepared to go into battle. Ahithophel is not prepared for battle. Just taking a few thousand men with you will not enable you to overcome David. What you need to do is to gather all Israel together, and you yourself lead the forces into battle. That is what is expected of a king. That is the way your father came to the throne. He was, first of all, a great general. We will have to overwhelm him and his men by sheer numbers." Hushai's advice was good all right, but it was not for Absalom's benefit. It was given for David's benefit. It would give David time to reconnoiter.

Now what did Absalom and the men of Israel think of Hushai's counsel?

And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel. For the LORD had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the LORD might bring evil upon Absalom [[2Sam. 17:14](#)].

Absalom and his advisors felt that Hushai's advice was better. Very candidly, friend, Hushai's counsel was certainly better than that of Ahithophel from David's standpoint. God was at work in David's behalf.

Warning Is Sent To David (17:22)

While they are attempting to gather together the nation and unite them under Absalom, Hushai gets a warning to David. He is to escape over Jordan quickly. In the next few verses we see the movement of the spy system. When the message reached David, he responded quickly.

Then David arose, and all the people that were with him, and they passed over Jordan: by the morning light there lacked not one of them that was not gone over Jordan [[2Sam. 17:22](#)].

Ahithophel's Suicide (17:22)

Because Ahithophel was a proud man and a highly respected advisor, when he saw that his counsel was not followed, he considered his career over. The record says that he put his house in order, then hanged himself.

Absalom Pursues David (17:24-29)

Absalom now has gotten together a great army from all the tribes of Israel, and they pursue David.

Then David came to Mahanaim. And Absalom passed over Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him.

And Absalom made Amasa captain of the host instead of Joab: which Amasa was a man's son, whose name was Ithra an Israelite, that went in to Abigail the daughter of Nahash, sister to Zeruiah Joab's mother.

So Israel and Absalom pitched in the land of Gilead [[2Sam. 17:24-26](#)].

David spent a great deal of his life running from somebody. In this instance, of course, it is indirectly because of his own sin.

David is actually in a very difficult position. He had fled Jerusalem without any preparation whatsoever. Those who were loyal to him had fled with him.

And it came to pass, when David was come to Mahanaim, that Shobi the son of Nahash of Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and Machir the son of Ammiel of Lodebar, and Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim,

Brought beds, and basons, and earthen vessels, and wheat, and barley, and flour, and parched corn, and beans, and lentiles, and parched pulse,

And honey, and butter, and sheep, and cheese of kine, for David, and for the people that were with him, to eat: for they said, The people is hungry, and weary, and thirsty, in the wilderness [[2Sam. 17:27-29](#)].

David finds that he has many allies in the people round about. They know David and the warrior that he is. The rulers of these kingdoms probably have very little confidence in Absalom, knowing he is deceitful and tricky. He would not be dependable. They do, however, have confidence in David. Therefore, they bring supplies to David and his men to ease their hardship.

Absalom's delay enables David to get supplies from his allies and ready his troops for combat.

Chapter 18

Civil War (18:1-8)

And David numbered the people that were with him, and set captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over them.

And David sent forth a third part of the people under the hand of Joab, and a third part under the hand of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and a third part under the hand of Ittai the

Gittite. And the king said unto the people, I will surely go forth with you myself also [[2Sam. 18:1-2](#)].

David wanted to go into battle with his men.

But the people answered, Thou shalt not go forth: for if we flee away, they will not care for us; neither if half of us die, will they care for us: but now thou art worth ten thousand of us: therefore now it is better that thou succour us out of the city [[2Sam. 18:3](#)].

The army refused to let David go into battle.

And the king said unto them, What seemeth you best I will do. And the king stood by the gate side, and all the people came out by hundreds and by thousands.

And the king commanded Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying, Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom. And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains charge concerning Absalom [[2Sam. 18:4-5](#)].

This is one of the saddest chapters in David's life. While the chapter of David's sin is the most sordid chapter, this is the saddest because it records the death of his son, Absalom. Because they have urged him not to go with them to battle, David takes his place at the side of the gate as the army marches out. It marches out under three leaders: Joab, Abishai, and Ittai. As each of these three captains comes by, David charges him to deal gently with his son. All the army heard him give this order. I think some smiled, but others felt a bit resentful. Absalom would always be a troublemaker, and they would like to eliminate him. David, however, loved his son and did not want him to die. He said to his commanders, "Deal gently with my boy Absalom." David's men heard what he said.

So the people went out into the field against Israel: and the battle was in the wood of Ephraim;

Where the people of Israel were slain before the servants of David, and there was there a great slaughter that day of twenty thousand men [[2Sam. 18:6-7](#)].

This was a civil war. It was a terrible thing. We had a civil war in the United States, and we know the sadness of brother fighting brother. David was a strategist and a general, and Absalom did not have anyone in his group who could match David's ability or the ability of David's three captains. Therefore, the children of Israel lost the battle.

For the battle was there scattered over the face of all the country: and the wood devoured more people that day than the sword devoured [[2Sam. 18:8](#)].

The troops of Absalom became entangled in the woods of Ephraim when they attempted to flee from David's army. They became bottled in; the forest became the cause of death for many of them rather than the sword. They had picked the wrong place to battle with David.

Absalom Slain By Joab (18:9-22)

And Absalom met the servants of David. And Absalom rode upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between heaven and the earth; and the mule that was under him went away.

And a certain man saw it, and told Joab, and said, Behold, I saw Absalom hanged in an oak [[2Sam. 18:9-10](#)].

Apparently Absalom's head got caught in the forks of an oak tree while he was riding his mule through the woods. He was fleeing, by the way; and, when he got caught in the tree, the mule keep right on going, leaving Absalom in quite a predicament. Under other circumstances this incident could be rather humorous. In this case it is not.

And Joab said unto the man that told him, And, behold, thou sawest him, and why didst thou not smite him there to the ground? and I would have given thee ten shekels of silver, and a girdle [[2Sam. 18:11](#)].

This man is shocked that Joab would want the prince, the son of David, killed.

And the man said unto Joab, Though I should receive a thousand shekels of silver in mine hand, yet would I not put forth mine hand against the king's son: for in our hearing the king charged thee and Abishai and Ittai, saying, Beware that none touch the young man Absalom.

Otherwise I should have wrought falsehood against mine own life: for there is no matter hid from the king, and thou thyself wouldest have set thyself against me [[2Sam. 18:12-13](#)].

The soldier said, "The king told us not to touch his son, and if I had done anything to him, you would have punished me yourself." But Joab did not have time to argue with him. He had a matter of business to take care of immediately.

Then said Joab, I may not tarry thus with thee. And he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak.

And ten young men that bare Joab's armour compassed about and smote Absalom, and slew him.

And Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing after Israel: for Joab held back the people.

And they took Absalom, and cast him into a great pit in the wood, and laid a very great heap of stones upon him: and all Israel fled every one to his tent [[2Sam. 18:14-17](#)].

When Absalom was dead, the rebellion was over. Joab had no right to kill Absalom, especially after David had given the command that he was not to be touched. However, he is weary of all the trouble Absalom has caused, and he knows that the death of this boy will end the rebellion.

Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok, Let me now run, and bear the king tidings, how that the LORD hath avenged him of his enemies.

And Joab said unto him, Thou shalt not bear tidings this day, but thou shalt bear tidings another day: but this day thou shalt bear no tidings, because the king's son is dead.

Then said Joab to Cushi, Go tell the king what thou hast seen. And Cushi bowed himself unto Joab, and ran.

Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok yet again to Joab, But howsoever, let me, I pray thee, also run after Cushi. And Joab said, Wherefore wilt thou run, my son, seeing that thou hast no tidings ready? [2Sam. 18:19-22].

Joab was reluctant to let Ahimaaz bear the news of Absalom's death to David because he did not have all the necessary information to give the king.

David Mourns For Absalom (18:23-33)

But howsoever, said he, let me run. And he said unto him, Run. Then Ahimaaz ran by the way of the plain, and overran Cushi.

And David sat between the two gates: and the watchman went up to the roof over the gate unto the wall, and lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold a man running alone [2Sam. 18:23-24].

This, now, is one of the most touching scenes in the Word of God. David is sitting in the gate of the city, anxiously waiting for word to be brought to him.

And the watchman cried, and told the king. And the king said, If he be alone, there is tidings in his mouth. And he came apace, and drew near.

And the watchman saw another man running: and the watchman called unto the porter, and said, Behold another man running alone. And the king said, He also bringeth tidings.

And the watchman said, Me thinketh the running of the foremost is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok. And the king said, He is a good man, and cometh with good tidings.

And Ahimaaz called, and said unto the king, All is well. And he fell down to the earth upon his face before the king, and said, Blessed be the LORD thy God, which hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord the king.

And the king said, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Ahimaaz answered, When Joab sent the king's servant, and me thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what it was [2Sam. 18:25-29].

David has but one question to ask Ahimaaz, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" But Ahimaaz did not have all of the necessary information to tell the king. He did not know that Absalom was dead. And, friend, there are many messengers running about today telling the human family that God says all is well -- but all is not well. Man is a sinner.

He needs a Savior. Man needs to know that the Son of God died on the Cross for him. Man needs to be born again. Ahimaaz did not have the message that David should have received.

And, behold, Cushi came; and Cushi said, Tidings, my lord the king: for the LORD hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee [[2Sam. 18:31](#)].

Notice that David's first question is about Absalom. His chief concern is not for who won the battle but for the safety of Absalom.

And the king said unto Cushi, Is the young man Absalom safe? and Cushi answered, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is [[2Sam. 18:32](#)].

Cushi has the correct information. He is gently telling David that Absalom is dead. Then follows David's mourning for his son. It is the most touching expression of grief in the Bible or in any other literature. It is at this point one feels like saying, "Lord, you have whipped David enough for his sin. Let up on your son David."

And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son! [[2Sam. 18:33](#)].

Chapter 19

THEME: David is restored to the throne

Joab Reproves David (19:1-6)

The news of Absalom's death was a real heartbreak to David. He had a tender love for his son, and he was extremely grieved when the boy died. Why? There are several reasons. First of all, I do not think that David was sure about the salvation of Absalom. You will recall that when David's first son by Bathsheba was born, he became very sick, and David fasted and prayed for him. When David heard that the little boy was dead, he arose, bathed, went to the house of God to worship, and then was ready for a good dinner. His servants could not understand his action. He made it very clear to them when he said, "I am going to him some day. He will not return to me, but it will be a great day when I go to him." He knew where the little fellow was. When Absalom died, however, David's heart broke. Why? He was not sure of the young man's salvation; he was not sure where his son was. Frankly, I believe that David felt his son was not saved, and that is why he was so stricken with grief. Also, even though David was a great king, he was a poor father; I am sure David realized this. He never quite succeeded in being the father he should have been, and Absalom was evidence of this failure.

David also recognized that trouble had come upon him because of the sin he had committed. God had told him that strife would never depart from his house because of it. That is exactly what happened, and from the time of Absalom's death I believe David was

a broken man. I think part of his grief was due to his disappointment. He had really hoped that Absalom would succeed him to the throne. He did not like the idea of Absalom rebelling against him, but he did want him to be the next king.

David's grief was such that even Joab was disturbed by it and rebuked David for it.

And it was told Joab, Behold, the king weepeth and mourneth for Absalom.

And the victory that day was turned into mourning unto all the people: for the people heard say that day how the king was grieved for his son [2Sam. 19:1-2].

It should have been a great day of victory and a day of rejoicing, because the enemy was defeated. For David, however, it was not a victory at all. Instead, it was a time of grief and sorrow beyond expression.

And the people gat them by stealth that day into the city, as people being ashamed steal away when they flee in battle [2Sam. 19:3].

David's army should have been rejoicing because they had won the battle. Instead they left the battlefield after the victory and retreated to Jerusalem as if they had been defeated. Why? Because Absalom was slain and it had broken the heart of David.

But the king covered his face, and the king cried with a loud voice, O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son! [2Sam. 19:4].

My, how David loved this boy! What a tender expression this is. David had been such a poor father -- he had handled things so badly -- but he loved his son and was broken by his death.

Now Joab was responsible for Absalom's death. I am not sure that David ever really comprehended just how his son died. I am sure that he heard quite a few stories relating how it occurred, but David probably did not want to pursue it too far.

And Joab came into the house to the king, and said, Thou hast shamed this day the faces of all thy servants, which this day have saved thy life, and the lives of thy sons and of thy daughters, and the lives of thy wives, and the lives of thy concubines;

In that thou lovest thine enemies, and hatest thy friends. For thou hast declared this day, that thou regardest neither princes nor servants: for this day I perceive, that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well [2Sam. 19:5-6].

Of course Joab is pushing this situation to the opposite extreme, but certainly David would have preferred others dying rather than Absalom; that is quite evident. Joab rebukes David because he is so grieved about the death of his son who had become his enemy and who would have killed David given the opportunity.

David Is Restored To The Throne (19:8-36)

Then the king arose, and sat in the gate. And they told unto all the people, saying, Behold, the king doth sit in the gate. And all the people came before the king: for Israel had fled every man to his tent [[2Sam. 19:8](#)].

The people needed some rallying point now. Everyone was depressed. It was a bad state of affairs: the man who had led the rebellion had been slain but, instead of rejoicing, the people witnessed the greatest grief that David ever expressed. However, after Joab talked to the king, David went up to the gate to let his men know that he deeply appreciated their loyalty to him.

And all the people were at strife throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, The king saved us out of the hand of our enemies, and he delivered us out of the hand of the Philistines; and now he is fled out of the land for Absalom.

And Absalom, whom we anointed over us, is dead in battle. Now therefore why speak ye not a word of bringing the king back? [[2Sam. 19:9-10](#)].

What happened was simply this: there were those who had gone over to Absalom's side and now that he was dead, they didn't know what to do. They decided that the best thing was to bring the king back.

And king David sent to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, saying, Speak unto the elders of Judah, saying, Why are ye the last to bring the king back to his house? seeing the speech of all Israel is come to the king, even to his house [[2Sam. 19:11](#)].

Apparently, even in the tribe of Judah, there had been a great defection to Absalom's side. Now David rebukes them for their action.

Ye are my brethren, ye are my bones and my flesh: wherefore then are ye the last to bring back the king?

And say ye to Amasa, Art thou not of my bone, and of my flesh? God do so to me, and more also, if thou be not captain of the host before me continually in the room of Joab.

And he bowed the heart of all the men of Judah, even as the heart of one man; so that they sent this word unto the king, Return thou, and all thy servants [[2Sam. 19:12-14](#)].

There was a unanimous desire to return David to his throne.

So the king returned, and came to Jordan. And Judah came to Gilgal, to go to meet the king, to conduct the king over Jordan.

And Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite, which was of Bahurim, hasted and came down with the men of Judah to meet king David.

And there were a thousand men of Benjamin with him, and Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him; and they went over Jordan before the king [[2Sam. 19:15-17](#)].

Shimei had cursed David when he went out. Now he wants to be the first one to welcome the king back.

And there went over a ferry boat to carry over the king's household, and to do what he thought good. And Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king, as he was come over Jordan;

And said unto the king, Let not my lord impute iniquity unto me, neither do thou remember that which thy servant did perversely the day that my lord the king went out of Jerusalem, that the king should take it to his heart.

For thy servant doth know that I have sinned: therefore, behold, I am come the first this day of all the house of Joseph to go down to meet my lord the king.

But Abishai the son of Zeruiah answered and said, Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the LORD's anointed? [\[2Sam. 19:18-21\]](#).

David was a generous fellow. He was a man who could forgive.

And David said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah, that ye should this day be adversaries unto me? shall there any man be put to death this day in Israel? for do not I know that I am this day king over Israel? [\[2Sam. 19:22\]](#).

David is saying, "Why should I pay attention to this fellow? I know I am the king of Israel." David is satisfied that God has restored him to this position. "Why should I worry about a little fellow like Shimei? Why should I put him to death? What he thinks doesn't amount to anything." There are many Christians today who let little things bother them. They let little people bother them, and they should not. Is God blessing you, my friend? Perhaps you are a discouraged pastor. Are you having trouble with your board of deacons? Are you having problems with a troublemaker? My friend, forget it. You are serving God. God is on your side. Live above that small irritation and serve the Lord -- make sure that is what you are doing. Forget about the other things; we need to live above them.

Therefore the king said unto Shimei, Thou shalt not die. And the king sware unto him [\[2Sam. 19:23\]](#).

David's final decision concerning Shimei was that he did not intend to punish him. In fact, David did not intend to deal with this man in any way.

And Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king, and had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came again in peace [\[2Sam. 19:24\]](#).

Mephibosheth, in deep appreciation to David, would not join in the rebellion. He remained loyal to David, and during all this time he fasted and prayed for the king. It is wonderful to have friends like that, is it not?

And it came to pass, when he was come to Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said unto him. Wherefore wentest not thou with me, Mephibosheth?

And he answered, My lord, O king, my servant deceived me: for thy servant said, I will saddle me an ass, that I may ride thereon, and go to the king; because thy servant is lame.

And he hath slandered thy servant unto my lord the king; but my lord the king is as an angel of God: do therefore what is good in thine eyes.

For all of my father's house were but dead men before my lord the king: yet didst thou set thy servant among them that did eat at thine own table. What right therefore have I yet to cry any more unto the king? [\[2Sam. 19:25-28\]](#).

Mephibosheth tells David, "If you think I have betrayed you, then do to me as you please. I have no right to ask any other favor of you at all."

And the king said unto him, Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land.

And Mephibosheth said unto the king, Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house [\[2Sam. 19:29-30\]](#).

This, I feel, proves Mephibosheth's sincerity.

And Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim, and went over Jordan with the king, to conduct him over Jordan.

Now Barzillai was a very aged man, even fourscore years old: and he had provided the king of sustenance while he lay at Mahanaim; for he was a very great man [\[2Sam. 19:31-32\]](#).

Barzillai the Gileadite was a patriarch from another nation who had been generous to David and had given him sustenance during the rebellion. Now David wanted this man to go back to Jerusalem with him so he could reward him for his generosity.

And the king said unto Barzillai, Come thou over with me, and I will feed thee with me in Jerusalem.

And Barzillai said unto the king, How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king unto Jerusalem [\[2Sam. 19:33-34\]](#).

Barzillai said to David, "I have not many more years. I have had my threescore and ten, and ten more. I know my days are numbered, and I would just as soon stay home. I appreciate your generous offer of going and living in a palace, but I have reached the age where things like that do not tempt me at all."

I am this day fourscore years old: and can I discern between good and evil? can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women?

wherefore then should thy servant be yet a burden unto my lord the king? [\[2Sam. 19:35\]](#).

Barzillai continues, "I am an old man. I can't hear the music anymore. Food does not taste like it once did. I don't want to come and mar the party. I don't want to be the one to slow down the king and his enjoyment."

[Thy servant will go a little way over Jordan with the king: and why should the king recompense it me with such a reward? \[2Sam. 19:36\]](#).

Barzillai helped David because he knew David was God's man. He had confidence in the king. This was his motivation to assist David.

It is too bad that David had not been a little more forgiving with his own son. When Absalom sinned and came back, it might have been different if he had completely forgiven the boy. If he had received him like the father received the Prodigal Son by putting his arms around him, placing a robe on him, and killing the calf for a feast, I believe David would have spared himself the awful rebellion which took place.

CHAPTERS 20--22

Chapter 20

THEME: Revolt, vengeance, and famine within the kingdom: war with the Philistines outside the kingdom

Chapter 20 is the record of another revolt against David. After all the troubles that have come to David, you would think the Lord would let up on him; but, as He promised, the sword will not depart from the house of David. Through all of this we do not hear a whimper from David. He recognizes it as the just punishment of his sin.

Seemingly as a result of the petty jealousy of the men of Israel -- because they had not been consulted in returning David to the throne -- another revolt erupts, led by Sheba of the tribe of Benjamin.

Sheba Leads A Revolt (20:1-7)

[And there happened to be there a man of Belial, whose name was Sheba, the son of Bichri, A Benjamite: and he blew a trumpet, and said, We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to his tents, O Israel \[2Sam. 20:1\].](#)

Sheba is called "a man of Belial," which means he is a rabble-rouser.

[So every man of Israel went up from after David, and followed Sheba the son of Bichri: but the men of Judah clave unto their king, from Jordan even to Jerusalem \[2Sam. 20:2\].](#)

It is amazing how faithless and undependable the children of Israel were. Some people might say, "Well, that was a crude day before man was developed and civilized." I would like to ask those people a question. Do you think things are any better today? It is interesting that the president of this country, or any public official, can make some little

statement that should not have been said and, when a poll is taken, they find out that his popularity has so diminished that he cannot be elected to office again. This can happen to any officeholder regardless of his party affiliation. That proves just how fickle the mob can be; it shows how fickle all of us are. God knows our hearts. [Jeremiah 17:9](#) says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" Whose heart is this verse speaking about? The heart of a brutal dictator? No. It is speaking about your heart and mine. Wicked things are in the human heart. The apostle Paul could say in [Romans 7:18](#), "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not."

The ten tribes of Israel followed Sheba in his rebellion.

And David came to his house at Jerusalem; and the king took the ten women his concubines, whom he had left to keep the house, and put them in ward, and fed them, but went not in unto them. So they were shut up unto the day of their death, living in widowhood [[2Sam. 20:3](#)].

These are the women, you remember, that Absalom had taken.

Then said the king to Amasa, Assemble me the men of Judah within three days, and be thou here present [[2Sam. 20:4](#)].

Amasa, you may recall, was the captain of the rebel forces under Absalom. According to [2Samuel 17:25](#) and [1Chronicles 2:17](#), Amasa is the son of Abigail, a sister of David. This would make him a cousin of Absalom. After the defeat of the rebels under Amasa and the death of Absalom, David made Amasa captain of his army in the place of Joab.

So Amasa went to assemble the men of Judah: but he tarried longer than the set time which he had appointed him.

And David said to Abishai, Now shall Sheba the son of Bichri do us more harm than did Absalom: take thou thy lord's servants, and pursue after him, lest he get him fenced cities, and escape us.

And there went out after him Joab's men, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and all the mighty men: and they went out of Jerusalem, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri [[2Sam. 20:5-7](#)].

In other words, this man Amasa is not moving. So Joab leads the army in pursuit of the rebel, Sheba. Also Joab brutally slays Amasa, apparently believing he also is a traitor to David.

The chapter concludes with Joab continuing after the rebel, Sheba. When Sheba sought refuge in the city of Abel, and the army was prepared to attack the city to get him, a wise woman intervened. Sheba is slain by the people of Abel. This, of course, ends the rebellion. However, it does not end the troubles of David, as we shall see.

Through all of these trials David is not crying aloud, nor is he whimpering. He knows that the Lord is dealing with him in the woodshed. Don't think that David got by with his sin, friend. He was severely punished. However, David loved God. Underneath the faith

that failed was a faith that never failed. That's David, God's man, a man after God's own heart.

Chapter 21

Famine For Three Years (21:1)

Chapter 21 opens with a period of famine in the land of Israel.

Then there was a famine in the days of David three years, year after year; and David inquired of the LORD. And the LORD answered, It is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites [[2Sam. 21:1](#)].

The reason God gives for the famine is rather strange, but in it there is a lesson for us.

The Gibeonites Take Vengeance On The House Of Saul (21:2-7)

And the king called the Gibeonites, and said unto them; (now the Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites; and the children of Israel had sworn unto them: and Saul sought to slay them in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah.)

Wherefore David said unto the Gibeonites, What shall I do for you? and wherewith shall I make the atonement, that ye may bless the inheritance of the LORD?

And the Gibeonites said unto him, We will have no silver nor gold of Saul, nor of his house; neither for us shalt thou kill any man in Israel. And he said, What ye shall say, that will I do for you.

And they answered the king, The man that consumed us, and that devised against us that we should be destroyed from remaining in any of the coasts of Israel,

Let seven men of his sons be delivered unto us, and we will hang them up unto the LORD in Gibeah of Saul, whom the LORD did choose. And the king said, I will give them.

But the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, because of the LORD'S oath that was between them, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul [[2Sam. 21:2-7](#)].

This is quite a remarkable passage of Scripture. To understand it we must go back to the days of Joshua when the Gibeonites deceived him and Joshua made a treaty with them ([Josh. 9](#)). Israel had been told by God not to make a treaty with anyone.

A treaty in that day (which some folk consider "uncivilized") was inviolate. When a treaty was made, the terms of the treaty were kept. Treaties were more than a scrap of paper. They were not made to be broken. In our day this matter of nations sitting around the conference table trying to make a treaty is almost laughable, because who will keep it? The average person has a right to be cynical about the way nations attempt to get along with each other. But when a nation is obeying God, its word is as good as its bond. Joshua made a treaty with the Gibeonites; but Saul came along and broke it. David attempted to make amends for Saul's actions, and he succeeded.

But the other side of the coin is interesting. God did not forget that Saul, representing Israel, had broken the treaty with the Gibeonites. Because the Israelites are His people, they are not going to get by with it. The three years of famine came upon them as a judgment. Now let me make this kind of an application to this incident, which I think is valid. You and I live in a day when it cannot be said that any particular nation is a Christian nation or a nation in obedience to God. But God does deal with nations; he does judge nations. God holds nations responsible -- it does not make any difference what nation it is. God judged Egypt. God judged Babylon. God judged Assyria, Greece, and Rome; and God will judge America. I am of the opinion (and will you follow me now very carefully) that we are in the process of dissolution as a nation. There are several evidences of God's judgment upon us. Let me mention several things.

Since World War II it has been our intention to be a peacemaking nation yet to live in sin. Believe me, friend, after World War II Americans started plunging into sin. Also, we could not quit fighting. There has not been a moment since World War II that our troops have not been fighting somewhere. If it isn't Korea, it is Vietnam. If it isn't Vietnam, it is in Europe or on some other continent. We are talking peace today as we have never talked it before; yet there is no peace. [Isaiah 57:21](#) says, "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."

Another indication of this dissolution is that we have no great statesmen today. I recognize that there are quite a few of our boys in Washington who think that they are clever -- and this type of thinking is not confined to any one party. Apparently they all feel that they could solve the problems of the world. Actually, it is rather pitiful to see this nation without great leaders. This is another evidence of God's judgment. Do you remember what God said in [Isaiah 3:12](#)? "As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths." We see a continual movement in this direction in our own nation.

Right here in Southern California we have become the center of pornography. Also many of the "cults" and the "isms" originate in Southern California. Not long ago God gave us quite a shaking. I am of the opinion that the earthquake was a judgment of God. Now I know that there is a scientific explanation for the earthquake. Beneath us is the San Andreas fault, and we have several other faults. In fact, we have a whole lot of faults out here! I believe God is beginning to judge America. America is guilty of lawlessness and gross immorality, and God judges nations for that. If there is one thing [2Samuel 21](#) reveals, it is the fact that God judges nations.

War With The Philistines (21:15-22)

Next we find that David is engaged in continual warfare with the Philistines.

Moreover the Philistines had yet war again with Israel; and David went down, and his servants with him, and fought against the Philistines: and David waxed faint.

And Ishbi-benob, which was of the sons of the giant, the weight of whose spear weighed three hundred shekels of brass in weight, he being girded with a new sword, thought to have slain David.

But Abishai the son of Zeruiah succoured him, and smote the Philistine, and killed him. Then the men of David sware unto him, saying, Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel [[2Sam. 21:15-17](#)].

David is a great man, and his men know that there is no one to take his place. Now David is getting to be an old man; when he goes out to battle, he finds he does not have the stamina he used to have. He is easily overcome -- that is an unusual experience for David! The leaders of Israel see that David is too old to engage in battle, and they tell him so. They tell him that he is needed more at home than on the battlefield.

A great battle took place, and God gave the victory to Israel.

[These four were born to the giant in Gath, and fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants \[\[2Sam. 21:22\]\(#\)\].](#)

The giant spoken of in this verse was Goliath. You will recall that when David went out to meet Goliath he took five smooth stones. I have heard it described vividly that because David thought he might miss the first shot, he had some stones in reserve. Those who teach the story that way say that the lesson for us is that we, too, should have a reserve. However, the explanation is that Goliath had four sons. They were part of the Philistine army. David knew that when he slew the giant the four sons might want to come out and fight him. Although David did not have this experience at that time, of course the sons would want revenge. If Abishai had not come to David's aid in this his final battle with the Philistines, one of Goliath's sons, Ishbi-benob, would have had his revenge.

However, when David was a young man fighting Goliath, he had four other stones and was ready to take on Goliath's four sons. He was deadly accurate with the slingshot. He probably practiced several hours each day. I imagine he could put a stone in the hollow of a tree that was not big enough even for a squirrel to crawl into.

This chapter concludes David's career as a warrior. In a marvelous way, God has delivered David from all his enemies.

Chapter 22

David's Song Of Deliverance (22:1-36)

In chapter 22 we have the song David sings after God has delivered him from his enemies. It is the same as [Psalm 18](#).

[And David spake unto the LORD the words of this song in the day that the LORD had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul \[\[2Sam. 22:1\]\(#\)\].](#)

This is a song that David composed, apparently, at the end of his life. As he looked back over his life, he could see how the hand of God had moved and brought him to the place of old age. I believe he composed [Psalm 23](#) about the same time, because at this time of his life he could say, "The LORD is my Shepherd; I shall not want." Paul put it this way, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ" ([Phil. 1:6](#)). God has brought you up to this

moment, friend; why in the world do you think he is going to let you down now? God's loving care for David in the past gives him confidence in the future.

And he said, The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer;

The God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour; thou savest me from violence [[2Sam. 22:2-3](#)].

"The LORD is my rock." A rock is a place upon which to rest. Christ is the rock of our salvation -- He is the foundation. We rest on Him. "And my fortress." That is for protection in life. "And my deliverer." He will deliver us in the time of temptation. "The God of my rock." The Lord is not only my rock, but He is the God of my rock, that is, of my faith. He is the object of my faith. "In him will I trust: he is my shield." He protects me from the enemy. "And the horn of my salvation." He is the One in whom I rest for salvation. He is "my high tower." That is where I go to view the land. He is my vision. "My refuge, my saviour." He is the One "who savest me from violence."

We are living in a day when we do not have anything that corresponds to genius in the way of writing. There is no great vision today. In our scientific age everything is run by computers. Everything is already taped. We know that two plus two equals four, but we don't seem to produce anything really original. How monotonous life is when God is left out of it. In contrast, David recognized God in all the experiences of his life, and his poetic expression of gratitude is a masterpiece of literature.

Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy gentleness hath made me great [[2Sam. 22:36](#)].

David was a rough and rugged man. He was hotheaded. But God is gentle, and David's love for and association with God had quieted him. It had made David a gracious man: "Thy gentleness hath made me great." You and I need to associate more with God. My, how men need God in this hour in which we are now living!

This is a great psalm. David's psalms are wonderful. They open the heart. They open up the mind. They open up life. They let you live, friend. We hear so much about people wanting to "live." We have comforts and gadgets galore today. Many young people are growing up in homes of affluence where they have every comfort. Many leave all of that and go out and live as vagrants. They say it is because they want to live. Well, my friend, "things" won't enable you to live. Running off and throwing away all the bands and cords with which God has bound us will not enable us to live either. It is only when we come into a right relationship with God that we are enabled to really live.

[2Samuel 22](#) is a great psalm, one which David composed as he looked back over his life. Also, when we come to [Psalm 23](#), you will find that I take the position that it was not written by a little immature boy. [Psalm 23](#) was not written by a college student who didn't really know what life was all about. Neither was it written by a middle-aged man who had ambition to get to the top in business or politics. It was not written by someone who wanted to become famous. [Psalm 23](#) was written by an old king who looked back upon his life and could trace the hand of God moving in it. David was a man who had tasted

everything. There was nothing that the world afforded that David had not tasted, my friend. David's conclusion was that the most wonderful thing of all was, "The LORD is my shepherd."

This beautiful song of praise is not only great literature, it opens new vistas for us and lets us see something that is much more glorious than a sunset or the rising of the moon. It speaks of the marvelous relationship one man had with the almighty God. How we need that today!

Chapter 23

THEME: David's last words; David's mighty men

David's Last Words (23:1-5)

Now these be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said [[2Sam. 23:1](#)].

David was "the son of Jesse." Jesse was a peasant, a farmer in Bethlehem -- David was never ashamed of that. God lifted David "up on high". He placed him with the great men of the world. David was the "anointed of the God of Jacob." The same God who took that clever, conniving fellow Jacob and made him Israel, a prince with God, is the same God who took David and put him on the throne. He is the same God who saved me and the same God who saved you. He is gracious, good, and loving. Oh, my friend, how wonderful is our God!

David was also "the sweet psalmist of Israel." He was a musician: he wrote music, he played music, and he loved to hear music. I share David's love for music although I have no talent for reproducing music in any form. But I appreciate good music. I don't care for what we call "rock" music -- in fact, to me it is not even music. I deeply regret that this type of music is being brought into the church. Good music, elevating music, music that thrills the soul has always contributed something beautiful to man's worship of his God.

The spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue [[2Sam. 23:2](#)].

The Spirit of God came upon David, and that is the way he wrote his psalms. Peter tells us that that is the way men wrote the Old Testament. "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" ([2Pet. 1:20-21](#)).

The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God [[2Sam. 23:3](#)].

It is obvious that the decisions made in our government today -- regardless of the party -- are not made "in fear of God." They are made in fear of the voters. There is little effort being made to please God in our government. I wish it could be said that the United States of America is a Christian nation. It is not.

I was rather amused by the comments being made by some men who were out of work because of a decision made in Washington by the Senate. Each man who was out of work said, "I voted for that man because he said he was going to vote for this project, and he voted against it." Well, all the politician wanted was to be elected to office. He didn't care anything about the men and their project. We need men who will rule in the fear of God and, until we get them, we are going to have corruption in high places.

And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain [[2Sam. 23:4](#)].

This is one of the more remarkable statements David ever made. You will recall that I said [2Samuel 7](#) was one of the great chapters of the Bible. In that chapter God made a covenant with David. The Davidic covenant, upon which the future kingdom of Christ was to be founded, provided for David the promise of posterity in his house, a royal throne of authority, and a kingdom on earth established forever. God promised that the Messiah would come through the Davidic line. He is the same One promised to Eve in the Garden of Eden. He is the same One promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He is the One whom Moses talked about. Joshua also spoke of Him. Now God's covenant with David concerns Him.

Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow [[2Sam. 23:5](#)].

What David is saying is simply this: "My house is not worthy of this. We did not receive this by merit. It did not come because of who I am." If David had gotten his just deserts, God would never have made a covenant with him. Neither would God have saved you or me if it had been on the basis of merit. And yet He made an everlasting covenant with David. God has made a covenant with us, too. It is recorded in [John 3:16](#): "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Now I hold on to that. God has made that covenant. I never asked Him to make it. He did not make it because of who we are. He did not wait for you or me to make a suggestion. He did it 1900 years ago. He said, "Here it is; take it or leave it." I take it, by the way. I rest upon that. David said that his covenant was "ordered in all things, and sure." Friend, you can depend upon God. David says, "This is all my salvation." Well, God's covenant with me is my salvation. It is what I desire, friend. It should be the desire of every believer's heart, "although he made it not to grow."

David's Mighty Men (23:8-39)

Next we are given a catalog of David's mighty men.

These be the names of the mighty men whom David had: The Tachmonite that sat in the seat, chief among the captains; the same was Adino the Eznite: he lift up his spear against eight hundred, whom he slew at one time [[2Sam. 23:8](#)].

These men, you will recall, came to David during the time that he was in exile. When David was being driven by Saul, he was an outcast, hunted like a partridge. He had to hide in the dens of the earth. It was during this time that those who were in distress came to him. They were persecuted and oppressed by Saul, and they fled to David. Others also came to him: those who had gotten into debt and could not pay, those who were discontented, and those who were bitter of soul. In this same way men come to Christ. They are in distress. According to their letters, many young rebels were once in distress. They write to me and tell me about their experiences with the Lord. They came to Christ with debts of sin, and He cancelled those debts. Are you discontented with life? If you are living a fulfilling life and doing all right, I guess I don't have any message for you at all. But if you are discontented down deep in your soul, and you want to be saved and have fellowship with God, come to Christ. He will remove your guilt and give you satisfaction in your life.

These men who came to David were outstanding men in many ways. They did many remarkable things. Let us look at a few of them.

And after him was Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite. And the Philistines were gathered together into a troop, where was a piece of ground full of lentiles: and the people fled from the Philistines.

But he stood in the midst of the ground, and defended it, and slew the Philistines: and the LORD wrought a great victory [[2Sam. 23:11-12](#)].

Defending a patch of lentils may not seem very important, but Israel needed the food. It was the custom of the Philistines to wait until an Israelite's crop was ready to harvest, then they would come ravaging, plundering, and robbing. This year, as usual, everyone ran when they came -- except one man, Shammah. He stopped, drew his sword, and defended it. One man against a troop of Philistines! "And the LORD wrought a great victory."

And three of the thirty chief went down, and came to David in the harvest time unto the cave of Adullam: and the troop of the Philistines pitched in the valley of Rephaim.

And David was then in an hold, and the garrison of the Philistines was then in Beth-lehem.

And David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Beth-lehem, which is by the gate! [[2Sam. 23:13-15](#)].

David was brought up in Bethlehem, and he thought about the refreshing water from the well there. I know how David felt. I was raised in a little town in Texas. My dad built our house and dug our well. The water was "gyp" water. A few years ago I went back to that place. I could hardly wait to get a drink of that water. I lay down on the ground by the faucet by the well and lapped up that water. My, it was delicious! I was raised on it. It took me back to my boyhood. Now David longed for water from the well at Bethlehem. He never gave a command to anybody to go and get him water, but three of his mighty

men broke through the Philistine lines to get it for him. That is the way they became mighty men.

I think of the command that the Lord Jesus gave in [Matthew 28:19-20](#) to go into all the world and preach the gospel. Then I think back in the past to the men who broke through the enemy lines and took the gospel to those who needed to hear. Think of the pioneer missionaries -- I don't like to mention just one man, but think of men like the apostle Paul or Martin Luther. A great company of missionaries followed after them, and they have been breaking through the enemy lines ever since and getting out the Word of God. These are mighty men of David's greater Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Here is another of David's mighty men.

And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man, of Kabzeel, who had done many acts, he slew two lionlike men of Moab: he went down also and slew a lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow:

And he slew an Egyptian, a goodly man: and the Egyptian had a spear in his hand; but he went down to him with a staff, and plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and slew him with his own spear.

These things did Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and had the name among three mighty men [[2Sam. 23:20-22](#)].

I love this one. This fellow slew a lion. That is not an easy thing to do, and he did it when there was snow on the ground. I know a lot of people who won't even come to church when there is a little rain on the sidewalk. May I say to you, they could not have much fellowship with a man like Benaiah. He was out there when there was snow on the ground. He was a tremendous man.

[Uriah the Hittite: thirty and seven in all \[\[2Sam. 23:39\]\(#\)\].](#)

Uriah the Hittite was one of David's mighty men. This is the man he sent to the front lines to be killed. This is the blot on the escutcheon of David.

Chapter 24

THEME: David's sin in taking a census

David commits another sin in taking a census. By now he should trust God instead of numbers. God again punishes David but permits him to choose his punishment. David casts himself upon the mercy of God. God sends a pestilence. David buys Araunah's threshingfloor on which to rear an altar to God. David's refusal to accept it as a gift reveals his deep dedication and devotion to God. This spot became the place where Solomon erected the temple. Although the Mosque of Omar stands there today, Israel will sometime in the future build again a temple to the Lord God of Israel on that spot.

The Census (24:1-14)

Actually, there are many who would not label this a sin. I call this another sin in the life of David. In God's sight, David's numbering the people was just as bad as his other sins. When you are guilty of breaking one part of the Law, you are guilty of all. His actions evidenced a lack of trust in God.

And again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah.

For the king said to Joab the captain of the host, which was with him, Go now through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, and number ye the people, that I may know the number of the people [[2Sam. 24:1-2](#)].

At the beginning God had instructed David to number the people. God wanted it done in order to encourage David and to strengthen him. God wanted him to know that there was a great army behind him.

Friend, faith is not a leap in the dark. It is not a gamble. Faith is not even a "hope so." Faith is a sure thing. God never asks you to believe something that is not true. Faith rests upon a rock, a sure foundation. The Lord Jesus Christ is the foundation. Faith, therefore, is not just leaping out into space.

However, there is a time in your life, my friend, when you need to live and move by faith and to recognize that you cannot live by your own effort or by numbers. Unfortunately, the church today has not learned to trust God. As a result, at the congregational meetings the spiritual victories are never mentioned. The things that are mentioned are how much we have in the treasury, how many we baptized this year, and how many members we took in. If the figures look pretty good, we consider that it is a great spiritual victory. Actually, it might have been the worst thing in the world that could have happened in that church.

David sins in numbering the people at this time. Why? He is now an old king. David knows that God has put a foundation beneath him, and he knows that he can overcome the enemy. He does not need to number the people at all. I sometimes think that the curse of the church today is to have a fellow in it who is always figuring up something, always putting it down in black and white, but knows nothing about the spiritual victory that should be taking place. That is what David does here.

And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the LORD, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now, I beseech thee, O LORD, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly.

For when David was up in the morning, the word of the LORD came unto the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying,

Go and say unto David, Thus saith the LORD, I offer thee three things; choose thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee.

So Gad came to David, and told him, and said unto him, Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou flee

three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee? or that there be three days' pestilence in thy land? now advise, and see what answer I shall return to him that sent me [[2Sam. 24:10-13](#)].

God gives David a choice of punishment. David's answer to the Lord is remarkable. It reveals that he is a man who knows how to trust God. I have said it before, and I will say it again: David failed, it is true; he committed sin, but down beneath the faith that failed was a faith that never failed. Basically David did trust God, as his answer to Gad reveals.

And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the LORD; for his mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of man [[2Sam. 24:14](#)].

God gave David a choice of three punishments. He told David to choose one of them. David did not choose any of them. Instead he told the Lord that he did not want to fall into the hands of a man. That is one of the things that I have always prayed in my ministry: "O God, never put me in a position where I am subject to a man, or men." Fortunately, as I look back on my ministry, God never put me in the position where I had to lick shoe leather. I feel sorry today for some men in the ministry who have to go around licking shoe leather in order to continue. God have mercy on them! David did not want to be subject to man. He was willing to fall into the hands of God because he knew how to trust God. How wonderful it is when you see David doing this. The Lord decided to send a pestilence upon Israel. David knew he would be all right in the hands of God. This is the way you and I should feel when God punishes us.

My friend, those whom the Lord loves, He disciplines. From experience I can tell you that there is a tenderness in His discipline, there is a comfort in it all, and there is a blessing in it. He alone can wipe away the tears. He alone can bind up the brokenhearted. He alone can heal the wounds that are in the heart. The doctor can sew you up when you have been in an accident, but in great emotional accidents only the Lord Jesus can bind you up and put you together again. How we need Him today in our lives!

David Buys The Threshingfloor Of Araunah (24:18-24)

Now we come to the last part of this book. David wants to build a temple for the Lord.

And Gad came that day to David, and said unto him, Go up, rear an altar unto the LORD in the threshingfloor of Araunah the Jebusite [[2Sam. 24:18](#)].

Notice that Araunah was a Jebusite, not an Israelite.

And David, according to the saying of Gad, went up as the LORD commanded.

And Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming on toward him: and Araunah went out, and bowed himself before the king on his face upon the ground.

And Araunah said, Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant? And David said, To buy the threshingfloor of thee, to build

an altar unto the LORD, that the plague may be stayed from the people [[2Sam. 24:19-21](#)].

David explains his reason for wanting the threshingfloor.

And Araunah said unto David, Let my lord the king take and offer up what seemeth good unto him: behold, here be oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing instruments and other instruments of the oxen for wood.

All these things did Araunah, as a king, give unto the king. And Araunah said unto the king, The LORD thy God accept thee.

And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver [[2Sam. 24:22-24](#)].

It is a noble thing that David does. Oh, that God's people would learn this lesson! Some folk feel that we should not mention finances in God's work today. I recognize that there is an overemphasis on money, but consider what David did. Araunah wanted to give David the threshingfloor. David said, "You can't give it to me. I am going to pay for it." Why? David continued, "Neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing." God have mercy on folk today who are taking a spiritual free ride. My friend, pay your way, and God will honor and bless you. This action of David's is heart-searching. Are we attempting to give to God that which costs us nothing? God forgive us for being niggardly with Him. May we give as David gave -- David, the man after God's own heart.

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